

## ABSTRACT

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

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### AN EXPLANATORY VIEW OF GENTRIFICATION AND THE DISPLACEMENT OF INDIGENOUS RESIDENTS

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This study examines the event known as gentrification and the displacement of the original residents of gentrified communities. This explanatory study explores gentrification with respect to the influence of urban governing regimes using Atlanta, Georgia and the Atlanta University Center as a model. This examination of gentrification also focuses on the demolition of public housing communities that are immediately replaced by middle-income planned developments and compares this event to traditional stage models of gentrification. There is also attention given to the socio-economic class differences between the original or indigenous residents and the new-arrival gentrifiers. This explanatory study examines gentrification using all of these factors in order to provide a complete view of the causes, effects, and results of gentrification using Atlanta as a case study.

AN EXPLANATORY VIEW OF GENTRIFICATION AND THE DISPLACEMENT  
OF INDIGENOUS RESIDENTS

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Statement of the Problem**

The purpose of this research is to explore and explain the factors that contribute to the displacement of individuals and communities due to gentrification. The urban landscape and demographic qualities are never permanent, nor do they remain in a fixed state for extended periods of time. Cities are in a constant state of renewal, redevelopment, transformation, and change. The non-static nature of the city does not always mean that gentrification and the displacement due to gentrification is an inevitability. Gentrification can and has been resisted in various communities in cities across the United States, with each community using specific methods and qualities to resist the displacement of long term residents with the new-arrival gentrifiers.

Atlanta, Georgia, has experienced gentrification in numerous communities that surround the central business districts of Downtown, Five-Points, and Mid-Town. The community of the Atlanta University Center (AUC) consists of six historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs): Clark Atlanta University, The Inter-Theological Seminaries, Morehouse College, Morehouse School of Medicine, Morris Brown College (now defunct), and Spellman College. The communities that surround the AUC have been targeted and experienced gentrification but have also been successful in resisting

gentrification. This resistance is unique to these specific communities because of the educational, historical, and religious factors that exist and remain in spite of the gentrification.

What has been missing from the vast amount of literature is a full and complete analysis of who experiences gentrification, from what vantage point, and how local business forces combined with governing regimes form the phenomena known as gentrification. The people who experience displacement due to gentrification (also termed indigenous residents) share little in common with the new-arrival gentrifiers. The indigenous residents differ vastly from the new-arrival gentrifiers; there are stark differences in the race and ethnicities, socioeconomic class, family structures, and educational backgrounds. These differences contribute to tensions between these two groups as one group moves in and the other is displaced.

Traditionally, gentrification has taken place over a period of time, occurring in several stages that mark the transition of a community. However, these stages do not always occur in a gradual period of time. The planned demolition of public housing units in several cities has brought in a new form of instantaneous gentrification or rapid gentrification. Atlanta, GA used as a case study, has experienced this form of instantaneous gentrification that is accompanied by the immediate displacement of indigenous residents that called the public housing communities of Atlanta home.

The Atlanta Housing Authority, with cooperation from private real estate developers, has demolished several public housing communities, replacing them with mixed income apartment communities. The demolition of Atlanta's public housing

communities was undertaken with the plan that relied on private section 8 housing as the main option for housing displaced public housing residents. The razing of Atlanta's public housing communities disrupted communities and dispersed individuals, the elderly, and families throughout the Atlanta metropolitan area, in search of private federally subsidized housing. The Uniform Relocation and Real Property Acquisition Act of 1970 mandates that all displaced public housing residents must be provided equal if not better quality replacement housing in addition to the moving expenses and assistance in finding new homes. James Rubenstein describes this law in these terms:

Congress passed P.L. 91-646, known as the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Act of 1970 (Federal Register 1971). The act requires local authorities to assure that every family displaced from federally – assisted projects after January 2, 1971, has the opportunity to move into comparable replacement housing. Under P.L. 91-646, a replacement dwelling is considered comparable if it meets two conditions. First, it has to be decent, safe, sanitary, adequate in size, and within the financial means of the displaced household. Second, a comparable replacement dwelling has to be located in an area not less desirable than the dwelling from which displacement occurred, accessible to places of employment, shopping, and other amenities, and available on a nondiscriminatory basis. To assure that all displacees are rehoused in comparable dwellings, the act requires that local authorities provide levels of advisory services and financial benefits that are far greater than those provided in the past.<sup>1</sup>

The plight of displaced indigenous residents is often ignored when compared to the might of urban governing regimes consisting of elected officials and real estate and banking interest. These governing regimes actively pursue and promote urban revitalization projects to attract higher income and property tax rates that accompany gentrification. The issues and concerns of the working class and working poor are drowned in a systemic push by urban governing regimes and new arrival gentrifiers, all

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1. James M. Rubenstein, "Relocation of Families for Public Improvement Projects: Lessons from Baltimore," *Journal of the American Planning Association* 54, no. 2 (Spring 1988): 185.

eager to change the urban landscape to fit their designs for better communities under the banner of urban renewal and redevelopment. In spite of the urban political and business alliance that favors redevelopment and neighborhood revitalization some communities are able to successfully resist gentrification. Communities like the Atlanta University Center and its surrounding neighborhoods have been able to resist gentrification efforts and minimize displacement because of African-American religious institutions, historically black colleges and universities, and black owned businesses. The longstanding presence and positive community influence of those institutions have had an anchoring effect that establishes and helps encourage long term residency.

### **Research Questions**

The literature pertaining to gentrification fails to address three main areas. The first area is often the political conditions that make gentrification possible. Clarence Stones' urban governing regime theory illuminated the inception, promotion, financing, and finally construction of urban revitalization projects in communities that were formally ignored by both elected officials and banking and lending thrifts. Attention must be given to why working poor and moderate-income communities who have not benefited greatly from investment from banks and mortgage companies suddenly see an influx of capital after wealthier, new-arrival residents move in with the ability to rehabilitate aging housing.

The second area that is often ignored is the plight of the displaced residents. The concerns of the poor are often silenced in the push to maximize profits derived from the improvement and sale of structures and land in the urban environment where land is

perceived to be scarce. The existing literature has no standard, largely accepted name for the original residents who experience displacement. The author of this work, after recognizing the institutional biases against the working poor, uses the phrase *indigenous residents*. Indigenous residents provides a description to people who are often seen as obstacles to improving communities. The term indigenous residents offers a value to the residents and communities that were established before the process of gentrification begins.

The third area that is often omitted from existing literature is the underlying factors that drive the back-to-the-city movements. The displacement of indigenous residents is often an after effect of revanchism, a movement that seeks to reclaim the inner-city from those citizens that are viewed as being primarily responsible for its demise and decay. The concept of revanchism is defined by Loretta Lees, Tom Slayter, and Elvin Wyly:

This troublesome word has its roots in late nineteenth-century France—revanchist (from the French word *revanche*, meaning revenge) were a group of bourgeois nationalist reactionaries opposed to the liberalism of the Second Republic, the decadence of the monarchy, the defeat by Otto von Bismarck in the Franco- Prussian War, especially the socialist uprising of the Paris Commune, where Paris' working classes took over from the defeated government of Napoleon III and controlled the city for months. The revanchist led by Paul Deroulede and the Ligue des Patriotes, were determined to reinstate the bourgeois order with a strategy that mixed militarism and moralism with claims about public order on the streets as they flailed around for enemies. This was a right-wing movement intent on taking revenge (*revanche*) on all those who had 'stolen' their version of France from them.<sup>2</sup>

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2. Loretta Lees, Tom Slayter, and Elvin Wyly, *Gentrification* (New York: Routledge, Taylor Francis Group, 2008), 223.

This historical description is relevant to the analysis of gentrification and the reoccurring theme of reclaiming the inner-city from the undesirable residents who are not considered middle class, main stream Americans. The inner-city is seen as a stolen asset that must be reclaimed from the poor, ethnic minorities, and the undesirable residents.

Smith identified a striking similarity between the revanchism of the late nineteenth-century France and the political climate of New York City which emerged in the early 1990s from the disintegration and vilification of liberal urban policy. "Whereas the liberal era of the post-1960s period was characterized by redistributive policy affirmative action, and antipoverty legislation, the era of neoliberal revanchism, which arrived in the early 1990s, was characterized by a public discourse of revenge against minorities, the working class, women, environmental legislation, gays and lesbians, immigrants . . . attacks on affirmative action and immigration policy, street violence against gays and homeless people, feminist bashing, and public campaigns against the political correctness of multiculturalism."<sup>3</sup>

This research addresses questions of which governing and private business elite profit from gentrification and what communities in the urban landscape are targeted and why.

RQ1: How is the agenda to attract wealthier taxpaying inner-city residents, carried out by urban governing regimes and how are these long range comprehensive master plans realized?

Class and racial conflict issues are addressed in the questions of the displacement of indigenous residents.

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3. Ibid.



RQ2: What factors contribute to an inherent inability for the indigenous community residents and the new arrivals to coexist on a permanent basis, and why must one group be removed to make way for another?

RQ3: Is there one group of gentrifiers, or are there several groups that relocate to the inner-city in waves, creating a need for a typology of gentrifiers ranging from the least wealthy to the super rich?

There are also questions pertaining to the resistance to gentrification. The indigenous residents are often viewed as impediments to neighborhood revitalization. There are notions that describe the original residents as being solely responsible for the physical, social, and economic decline of the inner-city. These notions legitimize the displacement of the indigenous residents and make their removal essential to the rebirth of the community. However, the indigenous residents are far from powerless. There have been successful efforts that have resisted gentrification. Questions arise around the methods of resisting gentrification and the factors that enable these communities to succeed.

The resistance to gentrification by the indigenous residents may create questions around the methodology used and may also give attention to the unique qualities of the communities that surround the Atlanta University Center (AUC). Questions also arise concerning the factors that have helped resist the displacement due to gentrification. The indigenous residents could not have resisted gentrification alone, regardless of their level of organization, political experience, and determination. The urban governing regime

that has the singular goal of urban renewal as an objective, may not be all-powerful but may seem an almost insurmountable opponent when faced by the average citizen..

### **Hypothesis**

Gentrification is the physical and demographic change in the urban environment and landscape and is related to the restructuring and structural refurbishment of older blighted areas with the intent of attracting increased investment capital in the form of new residents seeking to relocate to communities near the central business district. With the arrival of wealthier new residents in a limited space, the increasing cost of housing in the form of increased rent and increased property taxes, the displacement of the original residents or indigenous residents begins. The indigenous residents are not offered home improvement loans and new mortgages that are suddenly and readily available to the gentrifying new arrivals. This difference in socioeconomic class and investment capital contributes to and accelerates the displacement of indigenous residents.

There is also a newer rapid gentrification that occurs with the demolition of public housing that causes an instantaneous displacement, and disbursing of former public housing residents to the private housing sector. Loretta Lees, Tom Slayter, Elvin Wyly describe gentrification in this quote: "Gentrification is nothing more and nothing less than the neighborhood expression of class inequality."<sup>4</sup> The previous quote views gentrification as the localized result of racial and class disparities that is reflected in the physical landscape and demographic makeup of the city.

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4. Lees, Slayter, and Wyly, *Gentrification*, 80.

The term gentrification is laden with numerous connotations. Gentrification occurs with the full participation of urban governing regimes in stages or waves of the new arrival gentrifiers, and also in the form of rapid gentrification as a result of long range master plans for urban revitalization. These master plans for urban revitalization are the effort of the real estate interest, and appointed and elected officials that comprise the urban governing regime. The disinvestment that occurs in the communities of indigenous residents prior to gentrification, hampers the ability of the indigenous residents to remain in their homes.

### **Definition of Terms and Concepts**

*Gentrification* is defined as a cycle of disinvestment followed by investment in a specific community. Gentrification may also be used synonymously for urban renewal, especially when it is implemented with the specific policy objectives of attracting higher income residents. Often times the business elite (which includes real estate developers) may consider gentrification the physical improvement of a community with the specific goal of gaining a return in profits. There is also a connotation of gentrification that has grown to the extent of becoming an economic and social definition. This connotation focuses on the class conflict component of gentrification, when a new wealthier group of residents purposely displace an older indigenous group of residents. This negative connotation also involves the business elite as agents complicit in the displacement of poor and working class residents along with elected and appointed government officials. Both the business elite and the government officials are seeking wealthier residents, the business elite is seeking rapid sales of redeveloped or new urban properties,

and the government officials have a long range goal of increasing the tax base of the entire community.

Gentrification also has a racial connotation as white middle and upper middle-class new-comer residents displace black working-class and working-poor residents. Gentrification may be viewed as a physical and spatial expression of racial and class inequality that is realized community by community in the urban environment. Gentrification defined with class sensitive connotations may be accurately stated in this quote:

Gentrification is the process, one would begin, by which poor and working-class neighborhoods in the inner-city are refurbished via an influx of private capital and middle-class home buyers and renters . . . The poorest working-class home-buyers and renters . . . The poorest working-class neighborhoods are getting a remake; capital and gentry are coming home, and for some in their wake it is not an entirely pretty sight.<sup>5</sup>

Another definition of gentrification that is sensitive to race, ethnicity, and class is stated by Niel Smith:

Gentrification is the reinvestment of capital at the urban centre, which is designed to produce space for a more affluent class of people than currently occupies that space. The term, coined by Ruth Glass in 1964, has mostly been used to describe the residential aspects of this process but this is changing, as gentrification itself evolves.<sup>6</sup>

*Blow out* is the process of urban disinvestment, that produces blighted communities that may surround or are near central business districts.

Describing the process as it operated in the Baltimore housing market during the 1960s, Harvey et al. point to the outward spread of slums, from the inner-city (the

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5. Ibid., 44.

6. Neil Smith, "Towards a Theory of Gentrification: A Back to the City Movement by Capital, Not People," *The Gentrification Debates*, ed. Japonica Brown-Saracino (New York: Routledge Taylor Francis Group, 2010), 80.

broadening of the land value valley) and the consequent squeezing of still healthy outer neighborhoods against secure upper middle-class residential enclaves lying further out. Thus squeezed, owner occupants in an entire neighborhood are likely to sell out, often to land-lords, and flee to the suburbs.<sup>7</sup>

*Class or socioeconomic class* refers to a group of people, who have the same status economic, relative to income, or social standing. In a capitalist economy income and wealth are a strong determinant of class. Class may also reflect educational levels, but in a capitalist economy advanced educational levels are gained through payments in the form of tuition for the privilege of advanced instruction and structured study. Class may also have an isolating effect from a large section of an urban population. Persons in specific socioeconomic groups often do not come into social contact with members of other class distinctions, which in turn may give rise to social and physical isolation for members of a specific class. This isolation may be voluntary for the wealthier classes, and involuntary for the lower-income classes.

*White flight* is the abandonment of the inner-city, by the white middle and upper-middle class who long for the racial homogeneity of the suburbs and exurbs from the mid 1950s to the late 1970s. The motivation for white flight can be described by this quote: "Taken together, the attitudes of such suburbanites amounted to a national phenomenon that liberal political economist Robert Reich dubbed the succession of the successful."<sup>8</sup> In 1991, Reich noted that the country's most affluent were "quietly seceding from the large and diverse publics of America into homogeneous enclaves, within which their

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7. Ibid.

8. Kevin M. Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press), 247.

earnings need not be redistributed to people less fortunate than themselves.”<sup>9</sup> *Exurbs* are the communities that exist in rural areas beyond the suburbs and are sparsely populated compared to the inner-city and suburbs.

*Capitalized ground rent* is “the economic return on the land use rights for a property with its present condition taken into consideration.”<sup>10</sup> *Potential ground rent* is “the maximum return on the rights to use a property if the property was at its optimal and best condition and highest valued land use.”<sup>11</sup> *Rent gap* is the economic difference between capitalized ground rent and potential ground rent. “Rent gap can be defined as the leading motivator for a change in the land use to maximize profits from the land value. As the difference between capitalized ground rent and potential ground rent becomes larger the incentive to change the land use to gain more profits becomes stronger.”<sup>12</sup>

*Urban governing regimes* are defined as a governing coalition involving the urban business elite, and elected and appointed officials involved in the creation of urban policy. It is a coalition of partners that at times may make their interest known and realized within the urban policy and financial arenas; that function closely in the daily and long term administration and planning of the urban environment. Clarence Stone defines urban governing regimes in these terms:

An urban regime may thus be defined as the informal arrangements by which public bodies and private interest function together in order to be able to make

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9. Kevin M. Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern* 246.

10. Lees, Slayter, and Wyly, *Gentrification*, 61.

11. *Ibid.*, 53.

12. Lees, Slayter, and Wyly, *Gentrification*, 61.

and carry out governing decisions. These governing decisions, I want to emphasize, are not a matter of controlling everything. They have to do with managing conflict and making adaptive responses to social change.<sup>13</sup>

*Neighborhood Planning Units (NPU)* arose from a charter mandate, and from the federal government, requiring citizen participation in the zoning and planning process for the City of Atlanta. The city was divided into twenty-four citizen participatory units called NPUs or neighborhood planning units.

Every NPU contains members of the city's two hundred neighborhoods and were created to increase communication within and between communities. The city policy regarding NPUs stated that no official action regarding zoning could be taken without reaction and comments from the NPUs. The NPUs were encouraged to develop one, five, and fifteen year plans in order to develop short and long term comprehensive plans and to coordinate their participation in the planning process for the entire city.<sup>14</sup>

*Master Plan* also called a *comprehensive plan* is a single plan that includes the physical design for an entire community. The term Master Plan has traditionally been applied to entire urban areas, and even sometimes to regions or countries with regard to disaster plans and transportation plans. More often suburban areas are *Master Planned* or created from a *comprehensive plan* from inception to completion however, in the inner-city the term Master Plan is used with regards to redevelopment because the landscape has existing structures that, because of their historical or unique value will not be razed.

Often private communities are said to be 'master-planned' in that there is a single plan for the entire community. This is a somewhat different usage of the term *master plan* which ordinarily means the plan for an entire city, county, or other civil division. In the great majority of cases, private communities are built in

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13. Clarence N. Stone, *Regime Politics: Governing Atlanta, 1946-1988* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1989), 6.

14. Ibid., 86.

suburbia or outside the metropolitan area entirely, for that is where large blocks of undeveloped land are to be had.<sup>15</sup>

*Black community* is used interchangeably with *African-American community*, and is used to describe geographically compact areas within the inner-city that contain a vast majority of people of African descent.

*Revanchist city* is the notion that the city has been stolen by the poor and working class and should be reclaimed by the more affluent citizens who can properly care and maintain the urban landscape, and those who can appreciate the amenities that come with membership of that socioeconomic class. According to Lees, Slayter, and Wyly,

This phrase has its origins in the late nineteenth century France, the revanchist (a variation of the word *Revenge*) were the wealthy elite who were opposed to the socialist working class movement that took control of Paris. The revanchist were determined to recreate the bourgeois controlling order with the use of the military and a new moral order that would improve the quality of life in the city. This history shares a common theme with wealthy elite urban residents who are seeking to reclaim the urban landscape from the working poor, ethnic and racial minorities, and immigrants.<sup>16</sup>

*Stage Models of Gentrification* is the main groups that gentrify inner-city communities in various stages. Lees indicates that, "The first group is the risk prone, followed by the risk neutral, and later joined by the risk adverse."<sup>17</sup> All of these groups can and have been described as urban pioneers, who come with the intent of settling the wild untamed urban landscape. The super-rich or mega rich become the final stage of

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15. John M. Levy, *Contemporary Urban Planning: Seventh Edition* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2006), 99.

16. Lees, Slayter, and Wyly, *Gentrification*, 223.

17. *Ibid.*, 195.



gentrification only if a community becomes immensely popular and they can develop existing structures to meet their expensive demands.

*Relocation* is the assisted removal of indigenous citizens using either private or public funds, with the federal mandate of moving citizens to equal if not better living conditions elsewhere. It is a cooperative effort which involves families and individuals voluntarily moving to another community. *Displacement* is the involuntary movement of individuals and families due to a variety of factors. Some factors may be increased property taxes or higher mileage rates that are beyond affordability for indigenous residents or the increase in monthly rental rates for non-property owners. Other factors may be city inspectors who condemn existing properties that do not meet safety or zoning standards, combined with the inability of indigenous families and individuals to secure home improvement loans.

*Community* is used interchangeably with neighborhood. It is the area within specific geographical boundaries that may contain residential, commercial, public and private amenities that is recognized by the city government. A community is a segment of an urban population, living in one area under a shared set of laws and regulations.

*Indigenous residents* is a phrase that describes the original residents that live in a community prior to gentrification. The word *indigenous* is used purposefully to draw a comparison between the native people who are displaced and exploited by colonial powers. This phrase is used to bring attention to the plight of the original residents who suffer displacement due to gentrification.

*Rapid gentrification* is a phrase coined by the author, which describes the razing of communities (often public housing communities), replacing them with mixed income master planned communities. The stage models of gentrification theories are not relevant with regards to rapid gentrification; the new arrival gentrifiers immediately replace the indigenous residents.

*Redlining* is the disinvestment by the financial sector and insurance agencies of entire communities in which there is no investment of capital in the form of mortgages or insurance coverage.

In the early stages, disinvestment is extremely difficult to detect: we are not accustomed to taking notice when an owner does not repaint the house, replace the windows, or rebuild the roof. But gradually the deferred maintenance becomes apparent: people with the money to do so will leave a neighborhood, and financial institutions "redline" the neighborhood as too risky to make loans.<sup>18</sup>

The terms *urban pioneer* and *urban frontier* describe the new-arrival gentrifiers as saviors who arrive to rescue and reclaim the lost urban landscape. *Urban pioneer* describes those individuals and families who are among the first to arrive in a community that has experienced disinvestment, with the intent of purchasing inexpensive homes and structures for remodeling. The urban frontier describes the blighted community in need of the improvements that the gentrifiers will bring, in the form of investment capital and the greenlining of communities that were redlined by banking interest.

### Assumptions

The analysis of gentrification takes places in a capitalist mode of production and is driven by market forces. The redevelopment and retransformation of the urban

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18. Ibid., 53.

landscape is a constant force, the notion of static structures and permanently fixed skylines is a misnomer. As structures age and technology and construction practices improve refurbishment and redevelopment become a necessary inevitability. Capitalism requires the constant improvement of the urban landscape in order to maintain the profit seeking motive in a real estate market that depends heavily on consumption.

Every structure will age and eventually become obsolete. The use of premium quality building materials may delay the immediate need for routine maintenance; however, it will not eliminate the need for maintenance. As new styles and designs for building standards arise from newly trained architects, older aging structures may seem out of date by comparison. There are also constantly evolving standards of local zoning board that are influenced by community and citizen participation and changes in public safety requirements.

The definition of capitalism within the inner-city may not always adhere to the traditional definitions, such as the strict private ownership of the means of production. This factor must be raised due to the fact that contractors must submit bid for contracts with city, state, and federal agencies. Real estate developers and construction firms must also cooperate with urban planners and zoning boards for approval and construction permits. The theory of urban governing regimes is essential to the analysis of gentrification and will expose the public and private sector benefit from gentrification, and how the displacement of indigenous residents occurs due to a market driven process of redevelopment.

Another assumption that must be explored is the notion of limited space within the urban landscape. The scarcity of limited space is essential to the market driven price structure and the redevelopment of the urban landscape that creates a demand for the limited space surrounding the central business districts of urban areas. The notion of limited space does far more than create demand for parcels of land that surround the downtown areas of cities, it creates a constant redevelopment of land and structures with the goal of achieving the maximum profit within the real estate market. The notion of scarcity, combined a "profit above all else" theme of a "free market" systems create the perception that any tract of land has an inflated value. The problem with an inflated market driven value of land in the urban arena is that any use of the land that does not achieve that maximum profit in the form of property taxes, rental rates, and mortgage values, is seen as wasting the potential for profit from the land. The notion of scarcity combined with market driven, profit seeking motive will not allow working poor residents to occupy land that could attract substantially higher potential ground rent.

The assumptions of class and racial differences between the gentrifying new arrivals and the indigenous residents, is one of the most popular connotations that may come to mind when the issue of gentrification is mentioned. This assumption does not assert that people of different socioeconomic classes and different racial and ethnic backgrounds, cannot reside in the same community. The assumptions of class and racial conflict and tensions also do not assume that the end result of gentrification is violence, nor does it assume that tensions arise in every community that experiences gentrification. It does, however, address the class and racial conflict that occurs and is heightened when

an established community experiences the arrival of new residents who have different traditions, values, family structures, and lifestyles than the indigenous residents. The assumptions of class and racial tensions will highlight the process of displacement due to gentrification and how this displacement occurs within the urban landscape and the participants who benefit and are harmed by gentrification.

### Methodology

This research does not focus on a single point within the phenomena called gentrification, it analyzes gentrification in its entirety. This longitudinal view of the gentrification uses content analysis to examine the phases of gentrification and the drastic changes that occur over various periods of time. "Content analysis is a technique for examining information, or content, in written or symbolic material (e.g., pictures, movies, song lyrics, etc.). In content analysis, a researcher first identifies a body of material to analyze (e.g., books, newspapers, films, etc.) and then creates a system of recording specific aspects of it."<sup>19</sup>

The type of research used in this study is descriptive, which answers the question of "how" an event or phenomenon happens and "who" is involved. The historical analysis of gentrification will provide anecdotal evidence using process of gentrification that was experienced in the city of Atlanta. This case study of gentrification in Atlanta establishes patterns class and racial discrimination within gentrification, the contribution of urban governing regimes to gentrification, the process of white flight from the inner-

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19. W. Lawrence Neuman, *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon, 2000), 34.

city and the return of the white middle class to the inner-city, as well as the stage models of gentrification which includes the theories of revanchism and “back-to-the-city” movements and trends.

The descriptive form of research is used because it provides numerous details on situational dynamics, social and political setting, and the relationship between participants and those who experience the negative effects of gentrification. “Descriptive research focuses on the ‘how’ and ‘who’ (How did it happen? Who is involved?) and explores new issues or explains why something happens.”<sup>20</sup> “W. Lawrence Newman indicates that descriptive research has the following qualities: (1) Provides a detailed, highly accurate picture, (2) Locates new data that contradicts past data, (3) Creates a set of categories or classifies types, (4) Clarifies a sequence of steps or stages, (5) Documents a causal process or mechanism, and (6) Reports on the background or context of a situation.”<sup>21</sup>

This study adheres to all six of these qualities in its examination and historical analysis of gentrification, and the perceptions and misconceptions of whom is involved, affected by, and who benefits and suffers because of this change in the urban landscape and population. As stated before, this research is a case study of gentrification in Atlanta. Several communities that surround the central business district of Atlanta have experienced displacement due to gentrification over different periods of time. However, there are patterns and conditions that are shared by these different communities will bring

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20. W. Lawrence Newman, *Social Science Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, 4th ed. (Needham Heights, MA: A Pearson Education Company, 2000), 21.

21. Ibid., 22.

about an improved understanding of gentrification along with modifications to traditional theories associated with it.

### **Significance of the Study**

One may assume that the direct beneficiaries of this study will be the working class and working poor indigenous residents of older inner-city communities who have experienced displacement due to gentrification. This assumption is not incorrect; however the beneficiaries include both the indigenous residents and the new arrival gentrifiers. The gentrifiers and the indigenous residents both experience tensions that arise from cultural, class, and racial differences, although it is the indigenous residents that may experience the anxiety of a fear of displacement that may come with an arrival of the gentrifiers. The anxiety that the gentrifiers experience (residing near residents of a different class and race) is short lived if the community experiences all the stages of gentrification listed in the theory of the stage model of gentrification.

The racial, class, and sexual orientation of gentrifiers may deviate from what has been publicized by the main stream media. The arrival of African-American gentrifiers who identify themselves as urban pioneers are explored, along with gay and lesbian gentrifiers who also label themselves as urban pioneers. The term *urban pioneer* creates a connotation with the early American pioneers that settled vast amounts of land in the west and displaced the American Indians, making term indigenous residents become all the more relevant. The terms *urban pioneer* and *urban frontier* seek to describe the gentrifiers as almost heroic in their attempts to civilize the urban landscape, effectively rescuing the inner-city.

The frontier imagery is neither merely decorative nor innocent, therefore, but carries considerable ideological weight. Insofar as gentrification infects working-class communities, displaces poor households, and converts whole neighborhoods, into bourgeois enclaves, the frontier ideology rationalizes social differentiation and exclusion as natural, inevitable. The poor and working class are all too easily defined as “uncivil”; on the wrong side of a heroic dividing line, as savages and communist. The substance and consequences of the frontier imagery is to tame the wild city, to socialize a wholly new and therefore challenging set of processes into safe ideological focus. As such, the frontier ideology justifies monstrous incivility in the heart of the city.<sup>22</sup>

The analysis of gentrification that is popular has focused on three main groups of gentrifiers that comprise stages of gentrification. These three stages and the events that occur prior to, during, and after these stages however, has not been explored extensively. There is also the distinct possibility that the early gentrifiers or the risk prone stage of gentrification themselves can be displaced by later stages of gentrifiers, thus continuing displacement throughout the entire span of gentrification. Members of each of the stages of gentrification benefit from this study with the understanding of gentrification as a shift in the urban landscape and demographic makeup that may also have adverse effects for the middle-class as well as the working poor.

Also, this study is beneficial to the urban policy makers who have federal mandates involving the relocation of federal housing development residents as well as requirements from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The requirement that residents be provided with moving expenses, counseling, equal or improved new housing conditions, and help with transitioning to new housing is a federal mandate. If followed properly will possibly ease some of pain associated with

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22. Neil Smith, "Building the Frontier Myth," In *The Gentrification Debates*, ed. Japonica Brown-Saracino, 113-117 (New York: Routledge, Taylor Francis Group, 2010), 116.



gentrification. This study also explores the need for a continued government/citizen relationship with relocated and displaced citizens.

The significance of the study benefits the disciplines of urban politics and urban planning by exploring the displacement of long term residents as a byproduct of urban renewal and development. The physical restructuring of cities involves local government, the business elite in the form of banking interest and real estate developers, new arrival residents in search of inner-city properties, and the indigenous residents seeking to remain in the now trendy communities. The analysis of these factors provides a complete and multifaceted view of gentrification.

### **Limitations of the Study**

There are two major limitations of this study. One is tracking the populations of displaced people and the second is the ability to analyze every city where gentrification occurs in the United States (which could potentially be every city that has wealthier suburbs and poorer inner-city communities). The analysis of who is displaced and why reveals not only classism, but also a social invisibility of the working poor. Although there are federal requirements regarding the relocation of public housing residents outlined in the Uniform Relocation Act of 1970, there are difficulties in tracking the masses of indigenous residents who have been displaced by gentrification. The research illustrates the difficulty in tracking the indigenous residents after the process of displacement by stating the following:

Depending on the extent that residents view revitalization in such positive terms, however, the measurement of displacement will be even more difficult. Very little is known about the characteristics of displacees beyond the obvious point that those who suffer most from displacement are lower income households. A

study of Capitol Hill in Washington found that of sixty-five identified displacees, thirty were families with three families.<sup>23</sup>

There is an underlying reason for the ethnic and age qualities of the data available from this source. The author warns the reader about a possible bias within the data pertaining to the Capitol Hill renovation.

One must be particularly careful about these data; however, the Capitol Hill statistics are based on records maintained by Friendship House, a neighborhood service organization. These households are not likely to be representative of all families who have left Capitol Hill during renovation. Rather, they indicate the types of families most severely affected by displacement and who seek some form of assistance in relocating.<sup>24</sup>

In addition to difficulties obtaining reliable and accurate data on those displaced by redevelopment and gentrification, there is also the obvious bias that researchers on gentrification have traditionally held that focuses on gentrification and urban renewal but ignores the plight of the working poor indigenous residents. The act of focusing on those who are displaced takes time and resources that are traditionally not available to researchers whose primary focus is indigent residents instead of the affluent new arrival gentrifiers, who are coveted by the city officials and real estate developers alike.

Empirical studies of neighborhood revitalization raise more questions about displacement than they answer; at least they suggest hypotheses for further research. As noted earlier, the empirical research to date has focused primarily on revitalization, not its secondary effects. Second the analysis of displacement raises difficult conceptual and measurement issues that no one has addressed systematically is costly, time – consuming, and fraught with pitfalls, primarily because of the difficulty of tracking and locating movers.<sup>25</sup>

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23. Howard J. Sumka, *The Gentrification Reader*, ed. Loretta Lees, Tom Slayter, and Elvin Wyly, (New York: Routledge Press, 2010), 329.

24. Sumka, *The Gentrification Reader*, 329.

25. Ibid., 328.

It should also be mentioned that the logistics of measuring a group in transition or residents that are displaced is difficult at best. The new arrival gentrifiers have little or no interest in maintaining contact with their lower income neighbors, the indigenous residents are often viewed as threats to the safety and property of their new wealthier neighbors.

The bias against the working poor is obvious; however, it may also be a result of the marketplace which does not favor the development of lower income communities. The high profit margin gained from new construction and refurbishment projects along with the rapid increase in the property tax base, take priority over the welfare of individuals and families that cannot afford.

The new and improved community . . . the magnitude of dislocation is unknown . . . though the scale on renovation, demolition, deconversion, and condominium conversion noted . . . implies that tens of thousands of households have involuntarily displaced through various forms of gentrification over the past twenty-five years in Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, and Ottawa alone.<sup>26</sup>

Monitoring the displacement of residents can be thought of as near impossible endeavor for a researcher from a middle class background. Those without an understanding of the travel and housing patterns of the poor could not track or locate individual households displaced from private residences. The following observation highlights the difficulty of tracking this transient population:

Displacement however, is extremely difficult to quantify. Atkinson has called measuring displacement 'measuring the invisible,' whereas Newman and Wyly sum up the quantification problem as follows: In short, it is difficult to find people who have been displaced, particularly if those people are poor . . . by definition, displaced residents have disappeared from the very places where researchers and census-takers go to look for them. In the 1990s, especially, these

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26. Lees, Slayter, and Wyly, *Gentrification*, 218.

significant barriers to undertaking quantitative or indeed other research on displacement altogether. In the neoliberal context of public policy being constructed on a 'reliable' (i.e. quantitative) evidence base, on numbers on displacement meant no-policy to address it. It was almost as if displacement didn't exist.<sup>27</sup>

From the possible perspective of urban policy makers and real estate developers, the need to attract and maintain a sizable middle-class population creates the pro-displacement agenda. These sets of circumstances make the collection of quantitative data on displacement almost impossible.

The difficulty in tracking displacement due to gentrification may also lead a researcher to an examination of homeless populations which are the ultimate 'invisible' urban sub-population. Once an individual or family has no traceable address it becomes almost impossible for social service agencies to track them. It can also be argued that an individual or family can be equally untraceable if they have moved away from the metropolitan area, are residing with relatives, or are conventionally homeless (having no access to any form of housing).

The second limitation is the ability to analyze gentrification everywhere it may exist. Gentrification is a global phenomenon; it has the capacity to occur in any established city, suburb, or town where there are distinctive communities of people of dissimilar class and ethnicities. Gentrification can also be found in any urban area that has an established central business district (downtown); suburbs and exurbs that have experienced an influx of middle and upper-middle class residents, and roads, highways, and expressways between the downtown and suburban areas. With these general conditions considered, it also becomes clear that gentrification can occur anywhere there

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27. Ibid.

are class distinctions between residents in the inner-city and the suburbs. With the globalization of gentrification noted, reviewing every city that has experienced gentrification would be exhaustive and unrealistic. A single case study aids in this descriptive research and analysis of gentrification and displacement due to gentrification.

This research focuses on Atlanta as a case study. Atlanta has witnessed the demolition of federally subsidized public housing communities that were replaced by mixed income communities. The demolition of Atlanta's public housing was done with the intent of housing the displaced indigenous residents in the private sector using Section 8 housing vouchers. Public housing is being razed in major cities throughout the United States, and the process of gentrification as well as rapid gentrification is occurring in those urban areas.

The inability to predict exactly where the process of gentrification will occur over a period of years or decades cannot be determined. Much like an attempt at tracking and locating displaced persons, the exact determination within city blocks of where gentrification will take place is near impossible even for urban planners without viewing a master plan for a specific community. The actual event of gentrification is dependent on multiple factors, which include, city zoning boards, local banking interest, locally elected and appointed officials, potential home buyers from each of the stages of gentrification, but most importantly the first group of gentrifiers to move into an established community, and lastly the business elite who covertly promote the neighborhood revitalization efforts to the local government.

The presence of abandoned buildings in need of refurbishment, and vacant lots are not always a precursor of gentrification. All of the aforementioned factors must occur in collusion with each other along with the qualities of the physical space being considered and its surrounding communities. A working class community positioned between an airport and a heavy industrial zone may not have the same possibility for gentrification as a similar community located near a park and a golf course. However if a few businesses that cater to upper-middle class commuters gain popularity in a community, the chances for gentrifying new arrivals increases, in spite of blighted surrounding areas. These multiple factors along with the individual physical qualities of these communities, and the ever changing preferences of consumers, makes the advanced predictions of gentrification difficult without the advanced knowledge provided by a master plan or comprehensive plan.

### **Organization of the Study**

Chapter II contains a review of the literature used in this study. The range of literature covers several topics including class analysis and conflict, urban regime analysis, urban governing strategies, theories of power within cities, stage models of gentrification, community conflict due to gentrification, efforts to oppose gentrification, zoning efforts to ease conflicts due to gentrification, a history of the white middle class abandonment of the inner-city, comprehensive planning, race relations in suburbia and the inner-city, and the theories of urban sprawl.

Chapter III includes the theoretical framework of the research. The review of western capitalism and its function within the urban and suburban economy is relevant to

this study of gentrification. An analysis of the urban market will assist in the analysis of spatial changes and land values in the inner-city. These theories explain the causal events and correlation of events of gentrification. There is an analysis of the groups of residents that compose the indigenous residents and the new arrivals within a gentrified community.

Chapter IV contains the relevance of the study to historical and present research and knowledge on gentrification and its effects in the urban environment. Chapter V contains the data analysis and a review of both the quantitative and qualitative data used as well as the methodology used in the analysis of gentrification.

Lastly, Chapter VI summarizes all the findings of the research as well as recommendations to minimize the negative effects of gentrification and displacement due to gentrification. This chapter also details the effects of displacement in the traditional stage model of gentrification and displacement due to rapid gentrification.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **Gentrification and Its Origins**

The word *gentrification* has just enough connotations, both negative and positive, to make its definition elusive and multi-faceted. Gentrification has an often negative view for lower income residents of established communities. The long term residents of these often blighted neighborhoods with structures in disrepair, often see the initial newcomers as curious visitors. However, when these indigenous residents observe the refurbishment of houses adjacent to them, with loan money from local banks that have traditionally redlined black and Latino communities, tensions start to arise. It should also be mentioned that national insurance companies, who have also redlined these working class/ working poor communities, also start to appear to protect the real estate investments of the new residents. Hence, this chapter focuses on research that has occurred related to gentrification and its results.

Gentrification, viewed from the perspective of the new comers, has an almost altruistic bias. The gentrifiers may often view themselves as rescuing these classic homes and buildings from urban decay. They may see themselves as the primary element in urban renewal, bringing refinement to an urban wilderness. If the communities they are seeking to improve are urban wildernesses and the indigenous residents are thought of as



not deserving these homes, then the next logical conclusion may be to regard themselves as urban pioneers or urban homesteaders. These views and perceptions can be used as a central theme and a value free starting point in the analysis of gentrification.

One popular perception arises in the analysis of Providence, RI and its housing policies:

Gentrification—the flip-side of this deterioration—produces an upward trend in property values in previously neglected neighborhoods. Gentrification is a connotation-laden term, ‘conjuring up images of yuppies stealing urban housing from rightful inhabitants.’ It describes the economic, social, and political changes that accompany reinvestment in low-income communities.<sup>1</sup>

This perception contains some sensitivity to displacement of the indigenous residents and the massive change that takes place when community populations are transformed.

A more universal perception that is inclusive of race and class as well as the economic and political dynamics of gentrification declares the following:

Some frame gentrification within the decades long process of disinvestment and re-investment in a particular neighborhood, where public policies and the owners of capital conspire to allow higher income people to reap substantial profits from gentrification. Others use the term interchangeably with urban revitalization, to describe any commercial or residential improvements in urban neighborhoods. Others consider gentrification to more narrowly refer to the physical upgrading of low-income neighborhoods. Some have focused primarily on the economic actions of newcomers, namely the renovation and upgrading of the housing stock. Still others commonly refer to gentrification as the class and racial tensions—the socioeconomic effects—that frequently accompany the arrival of new residents into a neighborhood. Some consider gentrification positively others negatively. Often, though not always, gentrification has a clear racial component, as higher-income white households replace lower-income white households, sometimes in

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1. Matthew Jerzk, “Gentrification’s Third Way: An Analysis of Housing Policy & Gentrification in Providence,” *Harvard Law and Policy Review* 3, no. 2 (November 2009): 415, accessed July 2009, <http://www.hlproline/>.

the very same neighborhoods that experienced 'white flight and traumatic urban renewal in the 50s and 60s.'<sup>2</sup>

This perception is fundamentally important in that it gives a possible precursor to gentrification and its racially turbulent origins in the description of "white flight." The eventual return of the white middle class to the inner-city may be viewed as an eventuality. This perception is also inclusive of the opposing experiences of gentrification mentioned earlier.

The article "Gentrification: Practice and Politics" by Maureen Kennedy, successfully examines the origins of gentrification and the favorable economic conditions that lead to the drastic transformation of the urban landscape. Kennedy examines the causes of gentrification, the consequences of gentrification, the politics of gentrification, and finally gives the strategies and solutions to the negative effects of this phenomena. However, she starts at the definition of gentrification which is discussed at earlier can vary from person to person and from community to community. Defining gentrification can be almost as complex as defining democracy, since any of the definitions may contain academic and personal components. This examination of gentrification in its early stages provides an exact description of gentrification and opposes many of the misperceptions of gentrification and its effects.

The book *Gentrification* by Loretta Lees, Tom Slayter, and Elvin Wyly gives a comprehensive definition of gentrification as a combination of organized events that provides a way to a predictable outcome. They posit the following:

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2. Maureen Kennedy and Paul Leonard, "Gentrification: Practice and Politics," *The LISC Center for Home Ownership and the LISC Knowledge Sharing Initiative* (July 2001): 2, accessed July 2009, [www.liscnet.org/resources](http://www.liscnet.org/resources).

Gentrification is the process, I would begin, by which poor and working-class neighborhoods in the inner-city are refurbished via an influx of private capital and middle-class home buyers and renters . . . The poorest working-class home-buyers and renters . . . The poorest working-class neighborhoods are getting a remake; capital and gentry are coming home, and for some in their wake it is not an entirely pretty sight. Often as not that ended the conversation, but it also occasionally led to exclamations that gentrification sounded like a great idea, had I come up with it.<sup>3</sup>

This almost humorous perspective of “gentrification” may have its roots partially planted in socialist analysis, but it does successfully expose a multi-racial and multi-class concept of the experience of gentrification, as well as giving thought to the reality that gentrification can have entirely different as well as almost opposite meanings based on race and class.

### **The Role of an Urban Governing Regime in Gentrification**

A comprehensive understanding and analysis of the process of gentrification may require a brief examination of urban government and the effects of “white flight.” The process of governing within the urban environment is far more complex than the votes of city council members and city zoning boards or the possible veto of a mayor. To understand gentrification as a policy outcome of urban renewal efforts may require a review of the involvement of all of the forces that promote these policies, not just the public persona that often takes the form of elected and appointed officials.

### **Clarence Stone's Theory of the Urban Regime**

The business elite or the business leaders who are able to have their interest articulated and actualized by elected officials, form a large half of an urban governing

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3. Loretta Lees, Tom Slayter, and Elvin Wyly, *Gentrification* (New York: Routledge Taylor Francis Group, 2008), 44.

regime according to Clarence Stone, author of *Regime Politics* and *Power in the City*.

Stone describes a social mode of production involving the functioning urban regime of Atlanta from a historical review in the following statement:

Governance requires the power to combine necessary elements for a publicly significant result—whether it is building a downtown expressway system, developing new housing for blacks in the outer area of the Westside, hiring black police officers in a Jim Crow city, redeveloping substandard areas next to the business district, peacefully desegregating the school system in an era of massive resistance, launching a mass transit system, putting on a National Black Arts Festival, or rebuilding Underground Atlanta as a major entertainment district. Atlanta's postwar governing coalition has accomplished all of this and more.<sup>4</sup>

Stone's description of social production describes some of the goals that were met by a functioning governing regime. All of these accomplishments were achieved with the cooperation and joint efforts from the business elite and elected officials which compose the urban governing regime of Atlanta.

Urban regime analysis, according to Stone, involves the articulation and eventual realization of interest. However, within this analysis is the examination of power and the realization of interest within urban governing regimes. There is a perception of government that power is either centralized or plural (at times) and always absolute. This perception is far more than an untruth, it is a discouragement to groups whose interest may lie outside that of the governing officials or the business elite. This perception of power cripples the indigenous residents' efforts to resist the negative effects of gentrification, and may contribute to the feeling of helplessness in the face of governmental, banking, insurance, and real estate interest that promote and benefit from gentrification.

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4. Clarence N. Stone, *Regime Politics: Governing Atlanta, 1946-1988* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1989), 227.

### Clarence Stone's Theory of Political Power

Clarence Stone addresses this perception of power within the urban community and governing regime. Stone describes power and the business elite not in infinite terms but as one of cooperation between government officials and community interest. In other words, the urban regime governing coalition does not always automatically and instantly have its interest materialized. Stone comments,

The Atlanta business elite are quite influential in city affairs is itself not remarkable. What is noteworthy is that we have difficulty explaining this influence in conventional terms. It is not a form of dominance in which an elite, covert or overt, rules in command and control fashion. Business suffers defeats; it finds it must compromise; and it engages in extensive coalition building. In some sense, power in Atlanta is diffuse. No Group, business included, appears to be in a position to exercise much in the way of social control.<sup>5</sup>

Stone's description of power by the business elite may offer hope to the indigenous residents who desire to resist gentrification. There is a perception by many indigenous residents that once their community is targeted for redevelopment by the business elite there is nothing that can be done to save their homes.

What then, does this extraordinary influence consist of? There is little evidence of control by monopolization of the realm of ideas, though here we face some difficult issues. One might argue that there is ideological hegemony in the sense that there is no political challenge to capitalism, and most decision makers embrace the view that the community needs to promote economic growth through the encouragement of business investment. Yet, while there is no significant challenge to the idea of private ownership of capital, there is considerable diversity of opinion about how business investment should be encouraged and what trade-offs should be made on which terms.<sup>6</sup>

The position espoused by Stone is vital to the role of power and the influence of the business elite in the analysis of urban regime politics. This perception defeats the

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5. Stone, *Regime Politics*, 220.

6. *Ibid.*, 220-221.

notion that the business elite is a Goliath in the urban arena, and may give a possible strategy to the community organizers and activists who have the task of galvanizing and solidifying the original residents of the gentrified community. The quote also gives a hint to the discussion of urban capitalism and the interest of the elite vs. the working class and working poor and the role of business investment in these communities.

### **Robert Dahl's Theory of Political Power**

The notion that the urban governing regime is not all powerful is a reoccurring theme in Clarence Stone's writings. In a class sensitive and conscience capitalist economy it should be emphasized that the wealthy are not permanent victors and the poor are not always consigned to failure. Robert Dahl posits,

Subjects can gain a degree of independence from their rulers on matters of importance to themselves if they can make the cost of domination so high that domination no longer looks worthwhile to the rulers. Resources are not infinite after all, and exercising control nearly always requires an outlay of resources. Domination, it is fair to say, always does. Thus, control is almost always to some extent costly to the ruler; and domination is sure to be—though it may be cheap, does not come free.<sup>7</sup>

If ever there was a healthy form of thought essential for moving toward equality in the urban arena, the previous quote contains it. The idea of class domination being subject to a cost benefit analysis is a theory that must be preserved in order to view gentrification as a possible outcome and not inevitability.

Stone does not end his analysis of power in the urban environment on the notion that complete and constant class domination is not a possibility. He also argues that the

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7. Ibid., 223-224.

pluralist theories of social control may not be plausible in the face of a conscious active mass community of citizens. He states,

I contend that this line of argument arises from the social-control paradigm itself: If the many have reason to resent domination by the few, then the many should join together in opposition to the established regime and transform it into one more responsive to themselves. Pluralists discount the possibility that there is a basis for resentment; otherwise they would find mass noncompliance with the regime. Critical scholars believe that there are genuine grounds for resentment, but they credit elites with the ability to manipulate mass consciousness and its expression.<sup>8</sup>

The argument is almost a call to action as well as a criticism of the pluralist theory of power. If one considers gentrification a series of events and stages, the primary stages or beginnings of gentrification can be influenced heavily by an organized group of long term original community residents. The initial phases of community transition due to gentrification have the most potential for the indigenous residents because they have yet to be displaced. They can be organized and their common interest can be articulated and directed to the urban governing regimes, with the maximum effect being felt because they are an almost monolithic constituency. The indigenous residents have power because they are still occupying the coveted spaces and are legal holders and residents of the properties.

Clarence Stone's analysis of power in his book *Power in the City* offers consideration to the notion that power affects socioeconomic class relations and that power is influenced by situational factors. People who view themselves as indigent or poverty stricken may be the victims of economic deprivation, but their concept of community power may also be deprived. In a media-driven culture that equates wealth

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8. Ibid., 225.

with human worth, and promotes the value of the importance of things over the importance of people, it is not difficult to examine the perceived lack of power poor residents may view themselves as having. In a culture where the poor are seen as less than human or lacking societal value, the inverse perception may be given to the affluent.

It does not take a huge leap in logic to understand the perception working poor residents may have of the noticeably wealthier newcomers. This perception is far more complex than the feelings of envy by the poor who see shiny new automobiles, trendy and expensive name brand clothing, and pure bred canines on leashes. The perception of the gentrifiers held by the indigenous residents is that the wealthy have infinitely more power and resources.

Stone takes these perceptions and images into account when he describes power as a situational factor, not a constant monolithic occurrence. He posits,

(1) Power is not only interpersonal; it is also inter-group (including relationships between classes and strata). Few would quarrel with this position. (2) Power is not only a matter of intervention; it is also a matter of context, of the nature of or 'logic' of the situation. Here there is a need for some clarification. Most students of power agree that there is a phenomenon called 'anticipated reactions.' A may influence the behavior of B because B is fearful of the reactions of A to a given course of conduct; or B may be accommodating to A because B wants to stay in the good graces of A for future advantage. To illustrate, Robert Dahl observes that 'elected leaders keep the real or imagined preferences of constituents constantly in mind in deciding what policies to adopt or reject.' In this latter instance especially, it is not necessary that the passive 'actor' intends that its preferences be taken into account or even be conscious that a power relationship exist. Indeed, Dahl makes much of the indifference and unconcern of the electorate. All that is required for this to be a power relationship is that elected officials take into account preferences of the electorate because the electorate is in a position to give or withhold something of value—in this case, votes. Any actor may, just by possessing a politically useful resource, enjoy a power of advantage.<sup>9</sup>

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9. Clarence Stone, *Power in the City: Clarence Stone and The Politics of Inequality*, ed. Marion Orr and Valerie C. Johnson (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2008), 35.



This assertion by Stone affirms the latent potential of the indigenous residents of a gentrified community, only if they present themselves as a solid voting constituency. The notions of class power are no longer definitive and absolute in the face of a galvanized community seeking policy solutions to the problems of displacement, and the media attention this community effort would attract.

The potential of community power explained by Clarence Stone is not a theory that is without challenges and resistance from the affluent, business elite, and urban policy makers. The notion of power that is yielded by policy makers specifically is not resisted or unchallenged, nor is it without influences and inducements to articulate some policy interest over others. The governing and policy making participants in an urban regime are not free of the pressures of political influence and must consider these interests in the formation and implementation of urban policies. Stone describes a theory of systematic power in which policy makers and public officials express a structured and tiered system of power within policy formation and implementation. He comments,

The core of my argument is that we must take into account contextual forces –the facet of community decision making I label as 'systematic power.' In brief, this argument runs as follows: public officials form their alliances, make their decisions and plan their futures in a context in which strategically, important resources are hierarchically arranged, and that is, officials operate in a stratified society. The system of stratification is a motivating factor in all that they do, it predisposes them to favor upper, over lower strata interest. Systemic power therefore has to do with the impact of the larger socioeconomic system on the predispositions of public officials.<sup>10</sup>

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10. Ibid., 46.

Stone makes an argument that urban governing regimes consider the interest of the wealthy or upper-strata over the working poor or lower-strata, as a matter of sometimes competing interest and governing agendas that favor the wealthy:

The class character of community decision making does not result from a conscious calculation. As Norton Long has argued, rationality is a function of the parts rather than the whole. What I shall elaborate below is the argument that because officials operate within a stratified system, they find themselves rewarded for cooperating with upper-strata interest and unrewarded or even penalized for cooperating with lower-strata interest. In selective ways described later, public officials experience strategic dependencies predisposing them to favor upper-over lower-strata interest. Thus some groups are in a position to receive official cooperation, while others encounter substantial resistance. Put another way, different strata operate from different footings and therefore force different opportunity cost."<sup>11</sup>

The aforementioned statements by Stone describe the obvious and underlying obstacles for community empowerment and the resistance to that power from policy makers and public officials. Public officials may not always resist the interest of indigenous community residents. As Stone explains, they may simply favor interest that oppose the original residents of gentrified communities. Oftentimes, all that is needed to defeat the efforts of an organized constituency fearful of new residents of a different race and class is to ignore their interest in favor of wealthier citizens and real estate developers. According to Stone, the interest of the wealthier strata may receive official cooperation from public officials, especially when the political and economic cost of favoring the poorer indigenous residents is more than a politician is willing to bear.

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11. Ibid., 34.

### Concept of Policy Responsiveness by Browning, Marshall, and Tabb

When analyzing power within the urban theater and especially within the relationship between an urban regime and the citizens, the role of bureaucracy in policy implementation and policy responsiveness often arises. Policy responsiveness, which may be a major determinant of the effectiveness of the relationship between the citizenry and the urban governing regime, is a measure of policies generated by urban policymakers and how these policies serve the needs of the citizens and protect their interest. In the book *Protest is Not Enough*, Rufus Browning, Dale Marshall, and David Tabb define policy responsiveness as "referring to changes in city government policies that respond to minority interest. It is responsiveness to the interest of minority groups in the distribution of benefits. Incorporation may be thought of as the responsiveness of the system to the interest of inclusion and substantial authority and influence."<sup>12</sup>

When considering policy responsiveness as a measure of the attentiveness of public officials to the needs of the indigenous citizens of a gentrified community, one may follow a logical path of analysis to the implementation of that policy and who carries out the day to day operation of city government. In other words, the bureaucrats and their methodology and decision making routines have to be considered when the discussion of why some groups of citizens see their interest considered within the urban governing regime over other groups of citizens. The question is how are the interest of the preferred citizens, promoted not just by public officials but also reflected by actions of the urban bureaucracy? Stone answers this question in *Power in the City* when he states,

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12. Rufus P. Browning, Dale Rogers Marshall, and David H. Tabb, *Protest is not Enough: The Struggle of Blacks and Hispanics for Equality in Urban Politics* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press), 24-25.

Most studies of urban administration conclude that public service bureaucracies enjoy a high level of autonomy. In the provision of routine services, bureaucratic decision rules seem to be based mainly on internal considerations—administrative convenience, economizing scarce resources, and professional considerations.

Throughout, but especially in the provision of routine services, researchers find little evidence of a class bias in the allocation decision of administrative agencies. Instead they find 'unpatterned inequalities.' Yet while it is clear that class is by no means the only factor at work in service delivery, there is substantial evidence that the client's social position does indeed have an impact. The systematic – power argument directs us to the phase of service delivery where class is a factor. A puzzling feature of findings about 'unpatterned inequalities' and administrative is how to account for the higher level of dissatisfaction with service delivery among lower-income and minority groups. Why does level of satisfaction with and trust in government vary with social states? One possible answer is that lower-status groups have a greater need for government services.<sup>13</sup>

Stone explains the inequality of services provided by urban governing regimes to communities based on socioeconomic class:

Much of the unpatterned inequality in service delivery concerns agency decisions about the location of physical facilities, the allocation of dollars, or the frequency of response to service demands. It does not concern the actual behavior of individual service deliverers interacting with clients. It is at this interpersonal level of decision making that a class bias becomes evident, and differences in social position and life style have an impact. One close student of bureaucratic decision rules concludes: Street level bureaucrats develop stereotypes which suggest that lower class citizens are less deserving of a service or that attempts to deliver services to them will be unsuccessful. Consequently, the foot soldiers give low priority to delivering services to lower class clients. The result is that although agency decision rules produce 'unpatterned inequalities,' individual decision rules create 'patterned inequalities.'<sup>14</sup>

This argument explains not only the policy preferences that work in favor of affluent citizens, but also how the bureaucratic service delivery and implementation of policy tends to favor residents of a higher socioeconomic class. Stone also uses the theory of

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13. Stone, *Power in the City*, 46.

14. Ibid.

the Street Level Bureaucrat to explain how policy implementers benefit the interest of the middle class instead of the needs of poorer citizens:

Career advancement and professional recognition go to those professionals whose clients show visible improvement from treatment or those who are “interesting” in some way. Professional norms and mores are biased toward those clients with the greatest ‘potential,’ and potential is often perceived to be class related and intergenerationally transmissible. Upper-class clients—whether public school students, mental health patients, juvenile offenders, or library patrons—generally receive the best service and the most highly trained personnel. And, perhaps most important of all, they are the ones treated with the most positive attitudes.<sup>15</sup>

Stone continues his analysis of the inequality of service delivery due to socioeconomic class with this argument:

Thus, the aspect of systemic power involving social position and lifestyle does account for a significant inequality in service delivery and may well account for some of the dissatisfaction of poor and minority groups with local government. Even though service-providing professionals are largely autonomous, social inequality can enter service delivery through the norms and mores of various occupational groups. Variations in client treatment thus may not be random occurrences nor determined purely by internal agency considerations. Instead, the treatment of clients may be conditioned by the degree of social esteem they enjoy. If so further research should support the tentative conclusion drawn here—that class bias is more characteristic of the interpersonal and labor intensive aspects of service delivery than other areas.<sup>16</sup>

Stone briefly mentions the policy preference in favor of the wealthy is in direct opposition of the logic of services that should be provided on the basis of need. Those who need services the most are less likely to receive them based on interpersonal biases and preferences, the poor are not valued or seen as viable citizens like the middle class and the affluent. Based on Stone’s research, one can conclude that gentrification can be viewed as a policy preference by an urban regime that highly favors the wealthier new

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15. Ibid., 47.

16. Ibid.

residents over the older original residents that may use or need different city services.

Stone briefly expands his definition of an urban governing regime to include the business elite, public officials and city bureaucrats as functioning groups that operates under the direction of the public officials.

### **A History of Atlanta, Precursor to Atlanta's Gentrification**

The concept of gentrification must be viewed from a governing coalitional theory perspective which explains the policy preferences of the policy makers and how these policies favor the wealthy over the poor. However, there is also a historical analysis that is useful in explaining how these policy preferences arose, as well as explaining how the physical division of land within the urban and suburban landscape materialized. Clarence Stone a well known urban policy analyst used Atlanta as the focus of his analysis of urban regimes. Kevin M. Kruse also uses the city of Atlanta as the focus of his historical analysis of land use and racial tensions in the book *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism*.

Kruse examines post World War II Atlanta and the racial tensions, and housing patterns that were influenced by racial prejudice. The suburbanization of urban America could never have occurred without the support of the U.S. Department of Transportation and the interstate highway system that provided direct routes from the inner-city to the suburbs and exurbs. This network of state and federal roads provided an opportunity for white urban citizens to escape the threat of desegregation that was soon to become a federal mandate with the U.S. Supreme Court Ruling, *Brown v. Board of Education*. With the passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act, the traditional Jim Crow Southern way

of life was finally seen as crumbling by both civil right activists and white segregationists alike. The reality for black homebuyers who had both the income and legal ability to move into traditionally white urban neighborhoods was occurring to white Atlanta residents who were not yet ready for integration and the social changes it would bring.

Kruse provides an examination of the psychology of white flight from the inner-city to the suburbs along with a brief history of the event that would gradually lead to the return of white to the inner-city as agents of gentrification. Often the concept of white flight from the inner-city is under-explained as a prejudicial fear of blacks and Latinos, generating a move to a racially homogeneous suburb. Kruse exceeds this popular definition of white flight with the following statement:

Regardless of their origins, those who made homes for themselves in the suburbs generally held a common indifference to the people and problems of the city. The typical suburban resident, Carl Abbott observed in 1981, 'has no ties to the core city, no sense of responsibility for its problems, and little need for its services that are duplicated in the 'main street' of the regional shopping mall.' In the end, 'it seems clear that central cities are simply outside the daily orbit' of suburbanites. A decade later, such observations had become commonplace. In 1990, for instance, urban theorist Mike Davis decried the 'suburban separation' he saw in the affluent areas around Los Angeles, while in 1992 Thomas and Mary Edsall similarly noted the rising independence and isolation of such suburbs across the nation. In their study of the New Jersey suburb of Mount Laurel, David Krip, John Dioyer, and Larry Rosenthal likewise argued that the search for 'a better life' in suburbia entailed leaving the problems of the city behind. 'Pointedly, [white suburbanites] have left the city as blacks have been moving in,' the researchers noted. The very last thing they want to do is assume responsibility for those whom they deliberately left behind.<sup>17</sup>

Kruse frames the phenomenon of white flight by viewing the inner city as a problematic environment to be avoided, and not a desirable place to live and contribute to the solution of these problems. The psychology of the white exodus and divestment of

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17. Kevin M. Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 246.

the inner city is one of obsolescence. With the suburban growth and new state of the art shopping malls, new houses, and new amenities such as parks, movie theaters, and restaurants; there was little reason to return to the city for leisure. Cities large enough to have professional sports franchises would arrange for police details to be dispatched to control traffic and provide security for the temporary return of the suburbanites. Overall the departure of Atlanta's white middle class was one of complete and total disassociation with the inner-city and the black community.

Kruse describes the escape of whites to the suburbs as their desire to create an environment that was homogeneous and safe. The suburbs would become communities where one was not faced with the politics associated with race and class differences. The white middle class could find comfort in an environment that was not subject to the social and political changes that were consuming the rest of the world. Kruse highlights this theme when he says that,

The black community, together with a scattering of white liberals and moderate white elite undisturbed by the radical changes in the city, could only view the suburban exodus as the racist retreat. For decades, the two sides had struggled over the racial terrain of the city, but now segregationist had finally abandoned the field. At long last, a new era of black power and empowerment would dawn inside cities, like Atlanta. For those in the suburbs who looked back at the city, however white flight represented not a closed chapter from the past but rather a current state of mind. Once settled in suburbia, these whites did not abandon the mind-set of white flight but instead carried it to its logical conclusion, what might be termed the 'politics of suburban succession.' During the 1970s, these suburbanites severed all local ties with the city and, once that was accomplished, made their presence felt on the national stage to ensure that the isolation they now enjoyed in the suburbs would never be disturbed.<sup>18</sup>

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18. Ibid., 234.



The psychology of white flight as Kruse describes, is one of justification and feelings of entitlement of a better life; or at least preserve the present racial and social status quo. Kruse describes this particular path of logic in thusly: "The suburbanite says to himself, 'The reason I worked so hard for so many years was to get away from pollution, bad schools and crime, and I'll be damned if I'll see it all follow me.'"<sup>19</sup> Likewise, Joe Mack Wilson, later mayor of the Cobb County seat of Marietta, summed up the secessionist attitude in 1975 with an appropriate image. Pointing to the Chattahooche River which runs between the county and city, he tried to explain to an outsider the worldview of his constituents. "They love that river down there," he said. "They want to keep it as a moat. They wish they could build forts across to keep people from coming up here."<sup>20</sup> This quote also hints at the nature of fear and the preference of white suburbanites to have a special boarder between themselves and those of different class and racial identities. The phenomena of white flight is far more than a simple racist response to a perception of a changing world, it is a need for the safety of a separation from perceived threats. There is also a need for a homogeneous environment where everyone within the community is of a similar race and class, segregation preserved and respected that need. The desegregation mandates would then threaten and expose the white middle class to a degree of rapid change that they were not ready for and could not accept.

There is a theme Kruse develops with the quote from Mayor Joe Mack Wilson, which examines the class sensitivities of the white middle class and its disinvestment

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19. Kevin M. Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism*, 247.

20. *Ibid.*, 247.

from the inner city. This disinvestment of the inner city actually can be attributed to lower property tax revenues, decreased funding for vital city services, and fewer taxable dollars being spent and earned in communities that surrounded the central business districts. The effects of white flight would indirectly means less services for those who needed them most, such as the working poor who could not afford to leave these blighted communities. Kruse give substance to this aspect of white flight when he describes the actions resulting from attitudes concerning the working poor:

Taken together, the attitudes of such suburbanites amounted to a national phenomenon that liberal political economist Robert Reich dubbed the 'succession of the successful.' In 1991 Reich noted that the country's most affluent were 'quietly seceding from the large diverse publics of America into homogeneous enclaves, within which their earnings need not be redistributed to people less fortunate than themselves.' Reich would soon after become a member of Bill Clinton's administration, but his observations were shared by those across the political spectrum. That same year, for instance, conservative social scientist Charles Murray warned that continued economic success of the upper class would make it tempting to bypass the problem [of the underclass] by treating the inner city as an urban analogue of the Indian Reservation.<sup>21</sup>

The concept of class and racial isolation encouraged by white flight, was also present in a form of transportation segregation practiced by suburban Atlantans. Suburban Atlanta was notably different demographically than its Atlanta population. Suburbanites expected their state and federal tax dollars to preserve that difference in new transportation projects.

For instance, when Ben Massell, the largest individual landowner in the city, first learned of the plans for a perimeter highway around Atlanta, he assumed the new road would serve as a dividing line between a prestigious and prosperous central city and the backwards regions huddled around it. 'Like the Chicago Loop' he shouted. 'Everything on the inside chicken salad! Everything on the outside, chicken shit!' In time, the Interstate 285 perimeter would serve as a line of

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21. Ibid., 246.

demarcation between an economy which boomed and one which had gone bust, but the relationship would be precisely the reverse of the one imagined by Massell.<sup>22</sup>

The concept of transportation segregation in the aftermath and preservation of white flight is strongly present in the attitudes toward public transportation. Kruse exposes the resistance of white suburbia to mass transit that would connect the inner-city to the suburbs.

The Metro Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) was originally formed to be a regional transportation authority for the metropolitan Atlanta area which obviously included the counties that surrounded Atlanta and Fulton County. However, the resistance to MARTA from Cobb County residents and elected officials would arise out of the need to preserve the homogeneous population of Cobb County. The following reflection documents this resistance.

Cobb County commissioner Emmett Burton endeared himself to many of his constituents when he promised to stock the Chattahoochee (river) with piranha if that were necessary to keep MARTA away. In a similar vein, two other counties- Clayton County to the south and Gwinnett to the northeast-likewise rejected MARTA by massive 4-1 margins in 1971. As a result, MARTA became a 'metropolitan' system in name only. The suburbs refused to take part, and thereby remained isolated from the poor and minority residents of the city for decades to come. 'For an unemployed Atlantan without a car,' noted the *New York Times* in 1988, 'jobs in Cobb and Gwinnett counties might as well be in China.' That of course was precisely the point.<sup>23</sup>

It should be noted that Cobb, Gwinnett, and Clayton would eventually provide limited forms of public transportation in the form of bus lines that ran independently of Marta operations.

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22. Ibid., 243.

23. Ibid., 249.

The resistance and fear of city/suburban public transportation was almost duplicated in the resistance to public housing in the newly established havens for those who were escaping the inner-city. Kruse captures the fear and insistence of the suburbanites who saw white flight as a viable means to protect their possessions and comfortable lifestyles and viewed public housing as a direct threat. According to Kruse,

Not surprisingly, suburbanites reacted with considerable alarm. They were, once again, furious over the assertion that they bore responsibility for solving the problems of a city they had purposely left behind. But unlike the MARTA controversy, the suburban resistance to public housing was made fiercer because the calls for metropolitan solutions to 'urban' problems were being made by the federal government. In escaping the city, suburban whites had sought to escape not just the problems they associated with blacks but the solutions imposed by federal officials. Confronted with both once again, suburbanites renewed their rebellion. 'Middle America is losing control of its own country,' complained congressman Ben Blackburn of Dekalb County. 'I am really afraid that we are going to end up with some federal bureaucrat telling people where they have to live and in what kind of house.' In a sign of how far suburban whites would go to stop the federal dispersal of public housing, the leaders of six small towns around Atlanta's southern rim petitioned the state to have their region of 120,000 residents consolidated as the new city of 'South Fulton.' 'If we incorporate all of our own land,' the mayor of East Point promised, 'we could be immune from this public housing requirement.' Faced with such fierce resistance from suburban forces and the refusal of elected politicians to stand against them, the federal drive for public housing dispersal soon stalled. In the end, even Judge Edenfield backed away from his potentially revolutionary ruling. 'There's nothing I can do,' he shrugged. 'The court, by the nature of the institution, cannot go out and execute the laws. I can't build public housing or have it built. I can't appropriate the funds.'<sup>24</sup>

Kruse identifies an active resistance to the construction of public housing in suburbia which follows a logical path. The population of white suburbia was seeking an escape from the inner-city and its multi-cultural, multi-racial, and gay and lesbian communities. The rise of white flight as a means of escape from these challenges to a traditionally white protestant society was an inevitability in a post civil-rights, feminist,

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24. Ibid., 250-251.

gay rights era that took place in the urban environment. The suburbanization of the white middle class, followed by the black middle class would leave an impoverished urban population behind. Atlanta, as well as most major U.S. cities would soon have to contend with a demand for public services from a poorer population.

The white middle and upper-middle class would eventually move farther out from the inner-city in an effort to avoid its seemingly growing problems. The outward movement would create an urban sprawl as real-estate developers would design and build several generations of gated communities that would cater to those who saw diversity as less than desirable. The creation of these exurban communities would encroach on farmlands and rural areas, all while guaranteeing a lifestyle that was as dissimilar to the inner-city. The problem with creating sparsely populated rural suburban communities, (often referred to as exurbs) is that they are not only expensive to build and inhabit, but they are expensive for formally rural counties to maintain.

County governments now were charged with the responsibility of providing a series of services to the gated communities that were located between vast areas of farmlands and forest preserves. Public safety services (fire departments and police) would have to be provided as well as water, sewage, and other utilities. The rising cost of these privileged communities as well as the increased need for larger schools would prove to be a challenge for local and county governments. Atlanta metropolitan counties such as Rockdale, Gwinnett, Douglas, and Cherokee would all face these difficulties.

It should be noted, as the increasing cost of having exclusive communities in the outer suburbs were materializing, the real estate market values of communities

surrounding the central business districts of many cities would be cheap in comparison. Real estate speculators would soon follow the path of young white college graduates and the gay and lesbian communities, back to the now trendy inner city areas giving birth to gentrification out of the shrinking results of white flight. This was the birth of gentrification. Kevin Kruse in *White Flight* describes the origins as the outward movement of middle class whites resulting in a swell and contraction that would bring the next generation of the white middle class back to the inner city.

The movement of the white middle class away from and eventually back to the inner city is not entirely a result of class and racial fears. It is also a market reaction to the perceived wants of a given population. One may argue that market economies and urban governing regimes are more responsive to the wants and needs of the middle class and the wealthy. In an analysis of redevelopment of urban areas, the concept of urban governing regimes is given creditability by Robert Dahl. Dahl describes the business elite component of the urban regime as consisting of various members of the local business elite. His example of the New Haven, Connecticut, Development Administration exposes the collaborative nature and involvement of the urban governing regime in redevelopment efforts.

Because the top committee, the twenty-five-man Citizens Action Commission, included the heads of large utilities, manufacturing firms, banks, and other businesses, a reader expecting to find the hidden hand of economic elite might conclude his hunch was sound. A reader, who noted the extensive responsibilities for coordination placed on Logue, the Development Administrator, might assume that this official was the power behind the throne and in actual fact some citizens of New Haven evidently decided that the Mayor was a front man for the Development Administration.<sup>25</sup>

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25. Robert A. Dahl, *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City*, 2nd ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005), 123-124.

Dahl describes a governing regime rich with the involvement of various captains of industry and finance. However, the statement of a mayor as a front man for a city agency may be more public perception than truth. More often than not, governing officials are full participants in local redevelopment efforts. Please note that the statement made was “full participants,” governing officials function with the participation of the local banking and finance community. Redevelopment of an urban landscape is one of the most expensive undertakings a governing coalition can pursue, and financing and banking is a primary need.

Oftentimes when development projects are first pitched to the general public, the immediate response may be “it's too expensive; how are they going to pay for that?” That initial public response highlights the importance of the business elite. However, the federal government has been a long time participant in urban development. It should be noted that urban governing regimes have never been autonomously separate from the involvement of the federal government or the funding it provides. Dahl highlights this point by stating the following:

A partial solution to the first problem [being too expensive] was offered for the first time by Title I of the Federal Housing Act of 1949, which authorized the expenditure of one billion dollars in loans to cities for planning redevelopment projects and acquiring property to be cleared. An additional half billion dollars was made available in grants, the cities themselves being required to bear only one-third of the net cost of redevelopment projects. The grants were, in effect, a means of enabling a city to acquire and clear land and then sell it at a loss to developers.<sup>26</sup>

This observation by Dahl is important because of the obvious reference made to the discount given to private developers of land purchased in part with federal dollars. This

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26. Dahl, *Who Governs?* 115.

action is one taken by the business elite and governing officials that assure profits for developers in a sometimes volatile real estate market.

There is a definite correlation between the urban governing regimes and gentrification. It can be argued that there is symbiotic relationship with regard to the funding and land use in urban redevelopment. The business elite, governing officials, real estate developers and federal government have been participating partners in the redevelopment and the gentrifying results of that redevelopment. Robert Dahl and Clarence Stone make subtle inferences about the involvement of real estate developers within the urban governing regime, with it being safe to conclude that in redevelopment projects; real estate developers are an active participant within the urban governing regime. The process of redevelopment may contain a theory of urban policy as well as the urban governing regime analysis. In the book *City Limits*, Paul E. Peterson gives a detailed description of urban policies describing in particular three policies: developmental policies, allocation policies, and redistributive policies. Allocation policies and redistributive policies are covered later in this chapter in the context of class analysis and gentrification. Peterson describes developmental policies as follows:

Implementation of a developmental proposal can be expected to yield economic benefits that will protect the community's fiscal resources. The policy may even lead to growth and expansion. Plans to attract industry to a community, to extend its transportation system, or to renew depressed areas within the city are characteristic types of developmental policies. Such policies are often promulgated through highly centralized decision-making processes involving prestigious businessmen and professionals. Conflict within the city tends to be minimal, decision-making processes tend to be closed until the project is about to be consummated, local support is broad and continuous, and, if any group objects, that group is unlikely to gain much support; only through lawsuits can it delay or forestall action. If there is more important opposition, it is usually generated by agencies or organizations external to the local political system –



perhaps by a competing city or by a federal agency or by a private firm trying to achieve better terms in its negotiations with the city.<sup>27</sup>

Paul Peterson's description of developmental policies is almost synonymous with the theories of Clarence Stone and Robert Dahl. The role of the business elite and the absence of the effective dissent and resistance from the communities affected by development has been articulated by Stone, Dahl, and Peterson. This pro-development pro-business ideology that fuels the physical changes that must take place in order for gentrification to exist and continue often give rise to the negative connotations that describe gentrification. The following theory from the article "Gentrification's Third Way: An Analysis of Housing Policy and Gentrification in Providence," can be considered a byproduct of the pro-development push to attract wealthier citizens to the inner-city. It states,

Gentrification—the flip side of this deterioration—produces an upward trend in property values in previously neglected neighborhoods. Gentrification is a connotation-laden term, 'conjur[ing] up images of yuppies stealing urban housing from rightful inhabitants.' It describes the economic, social, and political changes that accompany reinvestment in low-income urban communities.<sup>28</sup>

This quote gives attention to the negative effects of gentrification and also raises the point of investment in low income communities.

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27. Paul E. Peterson, *City Limits* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 131-132.

28. Matthew Jerzyk, "Gentrification's Third Way: An Analysis of Housing Policy & Gender in Providence," *Harvard Law Policy and Reviews*, 3 no.2 (November 2009): 415, accessed July 2009, <http://www.hlproline>.

### Community Reinvestment Compliance Act

The definition of gentrification gives an indication that there is an increase in investments during and after gentrification. The increase in structural improvements to existing structures and the building of new homes and businesses is a natural progression and is essential to attract new wealthier residents and businesses that will cater to them. However, the implication is that there was substantially less investment in the form of government grants and low-interest loans specifically for home improvement and small businesses for the indigenous residents. One solution to the problem of the lack of investment in blighted communities is the Community Reinvestment Act. The Community Reinvestment Act is a statute that was proposed and enacted to help stem the disinvestment and shrinking pool of legitimate lenders in poorer communities. One of the main purposes of this legislation is summed up: "The Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) requires financial institutions to reinvest deposit funds back into the communities in which they located."<sup>29</sup> The term "financial institutions" refers to banks and credit unions, which may be few in number in some inner-city communities when compared to pawn shops and currency exchanges. "The CRA was proposed during the Carter Administration by Senator William Proxmire (D-Wisc.), whose primary purpose in enacting the legislation was to eliminate the practice of redlining. The bill focused on this practice because of the perceived unfairness of "credit exploitation, whereby money

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29. Vern McKinley, "Community Reinvestment Act: Ensuring Credit Adequacy or Enforcing Credit Allocation?" *Journal of Regulation* 4, (1994): 25, accessed July 2009, <http://www.cato.org/pubs/regulation/regv17n4/vmck4-94.pdf>.

was taken from the community in the form of deposits, but lent to borrowers outside of the communities.”<sup>30</sup>

The CRA was a direct attempt to thwart the effects of redlining. Most inner-city communities suffer from the effects of redlining in the form of restricted funding and the lack of home improvement loans. The primary stages of gentrification, almost always includes loans to improve and update older structures to attract new owners. These same loans are rarely made available to the indigenous residents before the process of gentrification begins and are often not available to the original residents after the arrival of the gentrifiers. In the book *Sprawl City: Race, Politics, and Planning in Atlanta*, Robert D. Bullard, Glenn S. Johnson, and Angel Torres highlight the importance of the CRA in mitigating the effects of redlining. They posit,

Studies over the past three decades have clearly documented the relationship between redlining and disinvestment decisions and neighborhood decline. Redlining exist when a mortgage application with a given set of applicant, property, and loan characteristics is more likely to be denied in a minority neighborhood than in a white neighborhood. Redlining 'hits the poor where they live. It accelerates the flight of full-service banks, food stores, restaurants, and other shopping centers in inner-city neighborhoods.’<sup>31</sup>

Many inner-city homeowners and business owners are hurt by redlining practices by banks, savings and loans, mortgage firms, and insurance companies. The federal government recognized this problem when it passed the CRA in 1977, a law designed to combat discriminatory practices in poor and minority neighborhoods. The CRA requires banks and thrifts to lend within the areas where their depositors live. The CRA

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30. Ibid., 26.

31. Robert D. Bullard, Chad G. Johnson, and Angel O. Torres, “Closed Doors: Persistent Barriers to Fair Housing,” *Sprawl City: Race, Politics, and Planning in Atlanta*, ed. Robert D. Bullard, Glenn S. Johnson, and Angel Torres (Washington, DC: Island Press, 2000), 101.

establishes that "regulated financial institutions have continuing and affirmative obligation to help meet the credit needs of the local communities in which they are chartered."<sup>32</sup>

### Limitations of the CRA

The CRA was drafted with the earnest intent of correcting redlining and lending inconsistencies. Lending discrimination can be said to contribute openly to the decline of working class inner-city communities, thus being one of the pre-existing conditions of gentrification. However, the CRA fell drastically short of its intent. The CRA was opposed by banking interest and lobbyist under the premise that the market should not be pushed in directions that were not profitable. The article *Community Reinvestment Act, Ensuring Credit Adequacy or Enforcing Credit Allocation*, takes an opposing and critical view as to the intent and effectiveness of the CRA. The article takes aim at minority banks, criticizing them for meeting the minimum requirement for lending in their communities set by the CRA. This article criticizes the reality of the CRA:

The strangest result of the CRA is the treatment of the minority-owned institutions that target low-income or minority groups, a market solution to the problem of a lack of community reinvestment. One would assume that such institutions would do well under the CRA, as they are essentially engaging in 'reverse redlining.' However, the reality is that a number of minority-owned institutions, including the largest black owned bank, Seaway National Bank of Chicago, the largest black owned thrift, Carver Federal Savings of Harlem, and a disproportionate number of Asian-owned institutions have been criticized by regulators over the past few years. Such institutions have come under criticism primarily because they have not been aggressive enough in lending to low-income borrowers within their communities. These institutions have also been criticized by regulators for focusing on too narrow a segment of the 'community.'<sup>33</sup>

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32. Ibid.

33. McKinley, "Community Reinvestment Act, 36.

The criticism of the CRA using minority owned banks is less that accurate and does not take the lower profit margins of the institutions into account. While these banking institutions have numerous depositors, their clientele come from specific communities in urban areas. Seaway National Bank of Chicago has its main branch on the outskirts of the solidly middle class community of Chatam, on 87<sup>th</sup> and Cottage Grove; with two smaller branch locations two blocks east and one mile west. The addresses of the depositors may cover several middle-class communities surrounding the main branch and may include numerous small black-owned businesses—such as beauty shops and dry cleaners—and a few large-scale black hair care product manufacturers. However, Seaway National Bank, the largest black owned bank in the Mid-West United States; does not have the same profit margins and risk assessment for extending loans as some of the national banks that have branches in these communities. Placing the burden of the responsibility for community lending on the smaller banks does not follow a logical path of analysis.

Vern McKinley's "Community Reinvestment Act, Ensuring Credit Adequacy Enforcing Credit Allocation," makes a critical analysis of the CRA from the view point of the banking interest. This article admits the concern that the banks did not want to be required in any way to lend to communities they considered risky, or were not part of their target demographic. They were in support of accepting deposits from the urban community "at large," but did not agree on fair lending practices in communities that depositors resided.

Ultimately, the procedural section was doomed by opposition from those who were concerned that the bill was a thinly-disguised credit allocation and would

represent a foot in the door toward the mandatory allocation of credit. Opponents of the bill feared that one day banks would be required to make unsound loans to meet their credit quotas. An example of such criticism came from Arthur Burns, chairman of the Fed at the time, who noted that the proposed statutory language interfered with the first principal of the banking system model: to facilitate the market flow of credit from areas of supply to areas of demand. He argued that this interference might inhibit lenders from opening depository institutions in locales where they would be cornered into maintaining certain levels of credit.<sup>34</sup>

The previous quote makes a clear statement that the banking interest are all too willing to accept deposits, but heavily resistant to extending credit in the form of mortgages or home improvement loans to those same depositors. The practice of redlining is far from dead, and there are few opportunities for indigenous residents to maintain their homes in the face of gentrification. In fact, an argument can be made that redlining and disinvestment in indigenous 'pre-gentrified' communities is a precursor to gentrification; and weakens the indigenous residents' ability to resist and survive gentrification. A working poor community with limited financial opportunities, and aging housing in need of repairs has little hope against private developers who have received a green light from city officials to 'improve the community' and attract substantially higher tax paying residents. Given these factors, the indigenous residents could be considered obstacles to progress and neighborhood improvement.

The notion of poorer residents as obstacles is a class based reaction to a physical scarcity of space and the increased value of land that surrounds the central business districts. However, in numerous cities public housing projects were located in communities that surrounded the central business districts such as Atlanta and Baltimore. The popularity of urban redevelopment projects would require the removal of residents of

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34. Ibid., 27.

public housing units that were declared obsolete by city officials and developers alike. With the demolition of public housing projects with the blessing of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), these high-rise and low-rise (two or three story) apartment style homes would have to be cleared to make way for mixed income communities. The residents of public housing were literally sitting in the way of progress and profits for real estate developers who would purchase the formally federally owned land at a discounted rate.

This form of state sponsored gentrification could not legally leave the residents of the soon to be demolished public housing homeless. The Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Act of 1970 made it a requirement that residents of federal public housing units to receive assistance with the transition to suitable housing when redevelopment projects replaced public housing with privately owned housing. James Rubenstein indicates the following:

Congress passed P.L. 91-646, known as the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Act of 1970 (Federal Register 1971). The act requires local authorities to assure that every family displaced from federally-assisted projects after January 2, 1971, has the opportunity to move into comparable replacement housing.

Under P.L. 91-646, a replacement dwelling is considered comparable if it meets two conditions. First, it has to be decent, safe, sanitary, adequate in size, and within the financial means of the displaced household. Second, a comparable replacement dwelling has to be located in an area not less desirable than the dwelling from which displacement occurred, accessible to places of employment, shopping, and other amenities, and available on a nondiscriminatory basis. To assure that all displacees are re-housed in comparable dwellings, the act requires that local authorities provide levels of advisory services and financial benefits that are far greater than those provided in the past.<sup>35</sup>

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35. James M. Rubenstein, "Relocation of Families for Public Improvement Projects: Lessons from Baltimore," *Journal of the American planning Association* 54, no. 2 (Spring 1988): 185.

P.L. 91-646 is far more than a statute meant to prevent homelessness as a result of urban renewal, it was intended to reposition indigent families to better housing and minimize the shock of relocation. It required local housing authorities to be active participants in the solution to the problem of the removal and transitioning of former public housing residents to what would often be federally subsidized housing. The well-being of the displaced residents had to be considered, as well as their financial, and emotional condition after the relocation. According to Rubenstein,

The Uniform Relocation Act's two main objectives in re-housing displaced households are that displacees should have standard, adequate, and affordable housing, and that the replacement housing should be in an area not less desirable or accessible than the former dwelling. Baltimore has made some progress toward those goals, but the city could still accomplish more.

The relocation program has clearly been successful at moving displacees to housing that meets code standards. But the displacees financial condition after relocation is less clear. On the one hand, 80 percent of tenants displaced since the effective date of the Uniform Relocation Act either have moved into lower rent housing or received an RHP (replacement housing payment) that exceeded the rent increase. On the other, even including the RHP as income, more than one-third of displaced tenants pay more than one-third of displaced tenants pay more rent after displacement than the government ability-to-pay standard.<sup>36</sup>

At first glance P.L. 91-646 can easily be mistaken for a simple entitlement requirement of local housing authorities by HUD. However after a second look, this statute actually concerns itself with the emotional well being of the displacees and their ability to adjust to a new neighborhood. It is important to note that P.L. 91-646 establishes a series of requirements that local housing authorities must achieve, how these local authorities achieve these goals may vary. There is some space for interpretation and bureaucratic creativity as long as the end result supports the requirement of the statute.

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36. Ibid., 194.



James Rubenstien outlines the range of achievements by local housing authorities while also explaining the deep heart felt pain of relocation by the families forced to move.

Several critics concentrated on psychological burdens displacees faced. The families who suffered most were those least prepared to cope with the forced move because of inadequate social and economic resources. Families found relocation a highly disruptive and disturbing experience and felt grief, pain, anger, and alienation at the loss of homes and neighborhoods. However, different studies found that most displacees adjusted completely after the forced move.

Other critics addressed relocations' impact on communities and specific neighborhoods. Those impacts included changing racial and economic patterns. Analysts placed relocation in a 'no win' position: some programs were under fire for concentrating, low-income blacks in the inner city, while others were criticized for scattering them.<sup>37</sup>

Rubenstien admits openly that in some cities the displaced families were relocated in different communities throughout the metro area. P.L. 91-646 does not and could not legally require local housing authorities to keep an entire community together when relocating them. Unfortunately the urban landscape and its scarcity of large tracts of vacant housing make this type of wishful thinking impossible. One would also hope that the local housing authorities would keep track of these families in order to assure their success in the wide range of communities they were relocated to. This would also indicate the success of P.L. 91-646 years after the initial relocation, through the tracking of these families and documenting their progress. However, Rubenstien would prove that this hope never materialized when he commented:

Furthermore, when displacees receive entitlements in a lump sum, the local agency no longer needs to keep track of families for several years after displacement or to periodically re-inspect the replacement housing. Thus, the granting agency no longer can assure that a displaced family lives in standard

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37. Ibid., 186.

housing for several years after relocation, as it could guarantee previously, when payments were made in annual or monthly installments.<sup>38</sup>

### **Atlanta Housing Authority's Strategic Plan**

Rubenstein's research draws attention to urban renewal projects that involve the demolition of federally subsidized public housing communities to make way for privately owned mixed-income communities. Although the HUD has specific guidelines for the relocation of public housing residents, there were no restrictions on the conversion of public housing units to privately owned communities. The demolition of public housing units has occurred in numerous large scale cities like Chicago and Atlanta under the auspices of the local housing authorities. The Atlanta Housing Authority carefully outlined its plans for the demolition of its public housing communities and their subsequent transformation to private apartment communities for mixed-income residents.

The Atlanta Housing Authority (AHA) Strategic Plan, produced and published directly by the AHA, is a detailed comprehensive outline of; the relocation of public housing residents, the demolition of the empty public housing units, and finally the transfer of the land to private developers. The AHA Strategic Plan gives the following philosophy for its move toward private housing:

Recognizing the dynamic Atlanta real estate market, if an attractive opportunity is presented to AHA that opportunity furthers AHA's strategies, goals and objectives, AHA will move forward with that opportunity. As these opportunities are presented to AHA and the determination is made to pursue these opportunities, we will engage in real estate transactions necessary to support the repositioning of our entire portfolio, the development of housing or mixed-use projects and the development of other facilities which are consistent with AHA's real estate strategies and goals. AHA will, as necessary and feasible, and if conditions so warrant, dispose of, demolish or voluntarily convert one or

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38. Ibid., 190.

more of the public housing properties in AHA's portfolio. AHA may also demolish or dispose of property for other valid business reasons that are not associated with its repositioning strategies including, but not limited to, the need to address life, safety and health issues of AHA's families. All of AHA's conventional public housing assisted properties are potential candidates for subsidy conversion, rent restructuring or full or partial demolition or disposition in FY 2008.<sup>39</sup>

The AHA has undertaken the demolition of Atlanta's public housing communities with the publicly promoted theme of eliminating housing that contains concentrated poverty and poor living conditions. The AHA under a program entitled *The Quality of Life Initiative* (QLI) revealed the strategy to dismantle traditional public housing in favor of mixed-income communities, with the stated purpose of eliminating pockets of concentrated poverty also commonly called ghettos. The AHA plan states,

The Quality of Life Initiative (QLI) will allow families in AHA's remaining conventional public housing communities the opportunity to escape environments of concentrated poverty. This strategy is consistent with AHA's vision of providing eligible families with access to affordable housing while de-concentrating poverty and building healthy communities.

Despite AHA's ongoing revitalization efforts, more than 5,500 families still live in environmentally and socially detrimental conditions of concentrated poverty. The QLI will enable these families to relocate from 12 obsolete public housing projects (two senior high rises and 10 family communities) to improved housing of their choice.<sup>40</sup>

The analysis of the AHA's strategic plan and its QLI fuel questions about the timing of these seemingly altruistic efforts to elevate the living conditions of Atlanta's public housing residents. One may openly question the need to eliminate concentrated poverty in Atlanta in the middle of a sizable trend of gentrification in communities that surrounded the central business districts of Atlanta. Several of the public housing

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39. Renee Lewis Glover, "AHA housing Authority Strategic Plan," *The Housing Authority of the City of Atlanta, Georgia* (2005): 25, accessed July 2009, [www.atlantahousing.org](http://www.atlantahousing.org).

40. Ibid., 28

communities were constructed prior to 1970 and have been maintained according to HUD standards, why would the need suddenly arise to demolish this housing after 40 years? It is quite possible that the true motivation to eliminate these public housing communities has far more to do with the escalating value of the land they occupy.

The strategic plan of the AHA openly details the involvement of private developers in the creation of the new livable mixed-income communities; thus the relevance of Clarence Stone's urban govern regime theory is maintained. The earlier quote from the AHA's strategic plan states, "Recognizing the dynamic of the real estate market, if an attractive opportunity is presented to AHA that furthers AHA's strategies . . . ." <sup>41</sup> The very definition of Stone's urban governing regime is the collusion between the governing officials and the business elite, which are the exact participants of the AHA strategic plan (the Atlanta Housing Authority and private real estate developers). The demolition of public federally subsidized housing with the backing and motivation from private real estate developers to be transformed into private housing is Clarence Stones urban governing regime theory realized.

It should be kept in mind that Kevin Kruse's book *White Flight* also takes a specific relevance in the analysis of the AHA strategic plan. Although the claim cannot be made that this is the same generation that escaped to the suburbs to avoid urban problems, it can be said that a large percentage of gentrifiers were former suburban residents who now wish to reclaim urban residence and all the amenities it offers. In other words, although the initial group that escaped the inner city in the late 1960s and early 1970s in the form of white flight would eventually return a generation later (in the

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41. Ibid., 25.

mid-1990s) to reclaim and improve the inner-city landscape. The land that contained these public housing units was too valuable and offered too great a financial return to continue in its present use of housing the indigent, and in a capitalist economy market forces found a way to reclaim these valuable tracts of land from public ownership.

The AHA's strategic plan is a detailed plan involving multiple stages from the razing of the public housing units to the construction of privately owned, mixed income housing. The definition of these new communities, (that were designed to attract middle-class and upper middle-class residents back to the city) are master planned communities.

It should be noted:

Often private communities are said to be 'master-planned' in that there is a single plan for the entire community. This is a somewhat different usage of the term *master plan* which ordinarily means the plan for an entire city, county, or other civil division. In the great majority of cases, private communities are built in suburbia or outside metropolitan areas entirely, for that is where large blocks of undeveloped land are to be had. Private communities within established urban areas are much rarer, largely because the land assembly problem is so much more complicated.<sup>42</sup>

Additionally John Levy's definition of a master-plan, and master-planned community is essential to understanding the redesigned inner-city communities that are the direct result of gentrification.

Levy's definition of a master-planned community was current with the period when his book *Contemporary Urban Planning* was first published. However, Levy could not have predicted the massive influx of commuting weary suburbanites who now saw the inner city as a suitable frontier to be resettled and redesigned to fit their needs and taste. The section of his definition that described master-planned communities as being

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42. John M. Levy, *Contemporary Urban Planning*, 7th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2006), 99.

mostly suburban in location is no longer true. With the increase of gentrified communities in the inner-city combined with aging and obsolete structures, the resulting inner-city master-planned communities would be an eventuality. It should be noted that master-planned communities would be popular in communities that were not zoned 'historic districts' and where the housing and other structures were dilapidated and not cost effective to refurbish. The large areas that contained public housing in Atlanta, while not in a state of disrepair, were older structures that stood on large acreage areas would make master-planned communities quite profitable.

The history of gentrification through the analysis of white flight, the political conditions that make gentrification possible, and the physical changes to the urban landscape are all critically essential to the analysis of gentrification. However, the dynamics of race and class have traditionally been given a cursory glance in analyzing gentrification and the communities it touches. What has been absent from the discussion is the analysis of gentrification is a detailed examination to class and the perceptions of the working poor and the middle class in reference to communities. The social phenomena of communities in transition and the interaction between indigenous residents and wealthier new arrivals, is well worth an in depth examination.

One can conclude that the possibility of displacement in a given community by a specific group of "outsiders" can create tension between the established residents and new residents. A second glance may reveal that the tension may also have to do with the radical change in the demographic qualities of a community in a relatively short period of time. Also relevant is the dramatically different class and cultural differences between

the indigenous residents and the new gentrifiers. The perceptions of each other, along with the class differences may lead to volatile tensions and are in need of analysis. What would be the reaction of a working class community that in spite of the CRA has not had access to legitimate lines of credit for home improvement, viewing the arrival of these "other" people who immediately are able to move in to houses that have been refurbished and modernized for the new owners.

Analyzing socioeconomic class differences can be a difficult undertaking. The perception of the working poor can be laden with stereotypes and misperceptions of poverty and what it means to be poor, limiting the understanding of one side of gentrification. The plight and perceptions of the poor as well as an analysis of class distinctions in westernized society are examined by Bell Hooks in her book *Where We Stand: Class Matters*. When the word gentrification is mentioned, it may immediately evoke the connotation of middle to upper-middle class white families moving in to a blighted inner-city community with the noble mission of creating a livable space. This connotation rarely considers the vantage point of those who have resided in that blighted community for years and even decades.

If the urban event described as gentrification were divided into just two sides, (temporarily dismiss the urban governing regime theory, and the generational complexities of white flight), those two sides would be described as the original or indigenous residents and the new arrival gentrifiers. Both of these groups have distinct socioeconomic class differences that are not only self identified but assigned to them by local governments, banking and lending thrifts, and also the media. Media distinctions

are discussed by Bell Hooks because both the poor and wealthy or in this case, indigenous and gentrifiers are influenced by media definitions and assumptions of socioeconomic class. Hooks points out that concern for the poor and their struggles are rarely discussed or examined in traditional media outlets.

Hooks explains this media bias and its influence in political and social arenas with this statement:

Mass media, especially the world of advertising, pimps the values of the ruling class to all other groups. A strong organized political working class does not exist in the United States today precisely because, through the socialization of mass media, a vast majority of poor and working class people, along with their middle-class counterparts, learn to think ideologically like the rich even when their economic circumstances would suggest otherwise. This has been made glaringly evident by the response of the public to efforts to end welfare. Lecturing around the country to groups of working people, including black folks, I am amazed when individuals who should know better talk about welfare recipients as lazy predators who do not want to work. Eisenstein contents: Ending welfare as the United States has known it also kills the idea that we share a public responsibility for one another. The extreme forms of this new poverty constitute the other side of the process of privatization begun a quarter century ago. The folks who wanted to end welfare had little knowledge of the actual dollar amount spent.<sup>43</sup>

Hooks describes not just a bias, but a philosophy of anti-working class and anti-poor sentiment that has permeated American culture. With this statement in mind, it is not difficult to realize how these perceptions of the poor saturate all classes and even stain the self-perception of working class and poor people. Expanding this perception to the phenomena of gentrification, it does not take a stretch of the imagination to understand the perceptions the gentrifiers may have of the indigenous residents. This is not to say that all new-comers have this level of disdain toward people of lower economic

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43. Bell Hooks, *Where We Stand: Class Matters* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 68.



classes or the indigenous residents, but it explains the tensions that have arisen between these two groups.

Hooks further describes the virtual societal media brainwashing against the poor as being a duality of attitudes about class. These attitudes against the poor have a matching complimentary attitude of political, social, and economic alignment with the wealthy. This is not the simple envy of the wealthy and class privilege, it is a total identification with the wealth ruling class and the articulation and actualization of their interest. Hooks writes,

Socialized by the media to believe that the ruling classed are morally better and superior to those who are less fortunate. They believe that the wealthy have earned their right to rule. And as a consequence they abandon any political commitment to economic justice or to ethical values that condemn greed and exploitation. While it is true that more than ever before in our nation's history rare individuals of any creed or color can enter the portals of the rich, they cannot maintain this class position and class power without betraying the interest of those who are needy.<sup>44</sup>

The aforementioned statement by Hooks explains a critical aspect of the effects of gentrification on the working poor and why there is little or no activism on their behalf. In the urban political arena as both Clarence Stone and Robert Dahl stress, even a galvanized poor electorate has diminished chances of opposing redevelopment projects in the face of an eager business elite consisting of banking and real estate interest. Those formidable opponents combined with a massive public bias against the working poor and their concerns would not only signal a loss for a well-organized poorer electorate but the silencing of their concerns to promote the forward progress of redevelopment. It should also be mentioned that the poor and working class rarely have the resources to make their

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44. Ibid., 77.

interest known beyond the use of protest and demand activity. Hooks captures this bias against the poor and the resulting policy gaps and political invisibility it causes.

Another perception of poorer indigenous communities that has originated from wealthier more conservative communities is the notion that the poor are not only lazy but also predatory. It can be admitted that the crime rates for theft and violent crimes are higher in poorer communities the fear being victimized by these crimes for outsiders may be much higher than the actual crime rate indicates. This fear is often promoted by corporate interest in the promotion of home burglar alarms and private security companies hired to patrol frightened homeowners communities. Hooks describes this lack of concern and articulation of poor interest with the following statement:

To stand in solidarity with the poor is no easy gesture at a time when individuals of all classes are encouraged to fear for their economic well-being. Certainly the fear of being taken advantage of by those in need has led many people with class privilege to turn their backs on the poor. As the gap between rich and poor intensifies in this society, those voices that urge solidarity with the poor are often drowned out by mainstream conservative voices that deride, degrade, and devalue the poor. Lack of concern for the poor is all the more possible when voices on the left ignore this reality while focusing primary attention on the machinations of the powerful. We need a concern left politics that continues to launch powerful critique of ruling class groups even as it also addresses and attends to the issue of the strategic assault and demoralization of the poor, a politics that can effectively intervene on class warfare.<sup>45</sup>

The aforementioned observation by Hooks, demonstrates the obstacles an anti-gentrification pro-indigenous rights group would face. Hooks brings attention to the fact that such a movement against the politically powerful and the wealthy business elite would have to contain a coalition of the working poor, elderly, and liberal activist to gain media attention and to capture the attention of the governing officials. The problem then

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45. Bell Hooks, *Where We Stand: Class Matters*, 46.

becomes magnified when one is asked to remember an organized group with these members, and existing across class and racial divisions, that has been successful against an established entrenched urban governing regime and the wealthy citizenry anxious to convert and occupy exclusive inner-city real estate? This is not an impossibility but Hooks does give a political, social, and economic reality based insight in to the seemingly uphill battle an indigenous citizen's rights group would face.

Bell Hooks openly campaigns for investment in poorer communities, with the logic that increased investment in human capital will eventually save cities, counties, states, and the national government substantially in health care cost, police and public safety, and incarcerating undereducated poverty stricken criminals. This declaration by hooks is a call to action for investment in poorer inner cities with the view that the residents of these communities are not only worth the investment; but investment in these citizens is just as crucial as investment in wealthier citizens and communities. According to hooks,

In a culture where money is the measure of value, where it is believed that everything and everybody can be bought, it is difficult to sustain different values. Hilfiker believes: "In such a system the only way to mobilize social forces against poverty is to show how much money society would save by investing in poor neighborhoods, alternatives to prison and preventative medical care. In other words, by a cost-benefit analysis of poverty." While this strategy is important we must face that for many people the thrill of having more is intensified by the presence of those who have less. Waste is not the issue here. To many greedy individuals, power lies in withholding resources even if it would be more economically beneficial to share.<sup>46</sup>

Bell Hooks is no doubt an advocate for the working poor, as evident from her assessment of class. However, mentioned earlier in the definition of gentrification, the

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46. Ibid.

disinvestment in inner-city communities is an essential condition for gentrification to occur. If there were substantial investment in poorer communities accompanied by a strengthened CRA, gentrification may still occur but the displacement of indigenous residents due to the arrival of wealthier newcomers might ebb substantially. Hooks raised the question of why deprivation, classism, and greed are so prevalent, and gives the answer that there is an economic, social, and media enacted form of class warfare where the working poor are seen as undesirable and less than human. Hooks' solution to this problem is the declaration that the poor are not the enemy and that issues that affect the poor eventually trouble the middle-class. Her solution to save society is based on investment at the point of need not affluence.

Although Hooks never states this claim openly, one can definitely derive the notion from her writings that people are and must always be more important than things. It has yet to be determined the cost of scattering an indigent community over vast areas with little or no assistance and counseling. The true cost of gentrification cannot be determined in reference to the plight of the multitudes of families that are dislocated due to the changing dynamic of gentrified inner-city communities. In the absence of a decade long longitudinal study, any information on the location, economic condition, and general welfare of the displaced families and individuals is cursory at best.

Bell Hooks is not the only researcher to explore the dynamics of class in the inner-city, nor is she the only author whose conclusions are essential to the class conflicts that arise in gentrified communities. Manning Marable also notes the class struggles in the book, *How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America*. When considering the

conditions and factors that must be present for gentrification to occur, the original residents of a community are always of lower income when compared to the new-comers. That fact by itself should not automatically lead to conflict. However, when the true dynamics of mixing the have-little with the have-substantially-more, and the different values both groups may have about themselves and each other, conflict may arise.

Marable explains this dynamic within the black community thusly:

In certain people: America's Black Elite, author Stephen Birmingham recounts the acute embarrassment of one Black upper class matron from Washington, DC at the sight of a Black young man donning 'Super Fly' pimp-type attire. 'Disgusting,' she whispered. 'There is the cause of all of our problems.' Her friend, more precisely, said, 'No, that is the result of all our problems.' Many Blacks who advanced into highly paid positions in the corporate world intensely dislike the mass cultural expressions of the Black poor and working classes, and refrain from any social relations with Blacks who rely on 'transfer payments' to make ends meet. For several generations, the Black elite of Harlem's 'Strivers Row' effectively created a cordon sanitaire around their neighborhood to protect themselves and their property from contact with the Black 'underclass.' When well-heeled residents contemplated the plight of their distant relatives or neighbors outside Strivers Row the nearly universal attitude was one of contempt. The Black poor were characterized repeatedly as 'lazy, shiftless, and no good.' In employing low income Blacks as occasional domestic workers, the Negro elite can be every bit as paternalistic as the white ruling class. 'One thing that can be said for the Black upper class,' one affluent Negro lady informed Birmingham, 'is that we are always nice to our servants.'<sup>47</sup>

There is a central theme of class superiority that is consistent throughout the works of Hooks and Marable. It is essential to the dynamics of gentrification at the primary point when there are two groups of people from distinctly different classes living in close proximity with each other. Considering the quote from Marable, it should be mentioned that gentrification can and sometimes occurs entirely within a racial group. There have been specific instances in Atlanta where in communities surrounding the

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47. Manning Marable, *How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America: Problems in Race, Political Economy, and Society* (Cambridge, MA, South End Press, 1999), 65-66.

Atlanta University Center where middle-class black residents have gentrified poorer black communities. Also, the Cabbage Town community saw the gentrification of a working class white community by much wealthier white citizens.

Marable, although sensitive to the treatment of the poor, unlike Hooks, discusses the negative effects of crime within the underclass and its lasting effects in the black community. One of the factors that depresses the property values in pre-gentrified communities is the higher than average crime rates. This is also one of the factors that makes gentrification possible with the devaluation of the land due to a general weariness of investors prior to the arrival of the much coveted middle class. Marable makes the revelation that,

The existence of a massive 'ghetto class' disrupts the internal functions of the mostly working class Black community, turning Blacks in blue collar jobs against those who never had any job. The social institutions created by working class Blacks to preserve a sense of collective humanity, culture and decency within the narrow confines of the inner-city are eroded and eventually overturned. Sub-proletarianization and the extension of permanent penury to broad segments of the Black majority provoke the disruption of Black families; increase the number of Black-on-Black murders, rapes, suicides and assaults; and make terror the way of life for all Blacks of every class background who live in or near the inner-city.<sup>48</sup>

Marable's description of the black proletariats demise at the hands of the criminalized ghetto class or lumpenproletariat is definitely a component of both inner-city decay and a pre-qualifying factor for gentrification. This is a quality of a blighted community where poverty may be contained within a specific geographically compact area, and essential resources are absent due to redlining and disinvestment. Both Hooks and Marable agree that this is the result of an exploitative capitalism and a classist cast

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48. Ibid., 67.

system. Hooks does point out that not all of the blame for these defunct communities lies with external factors. She describes a flight of the black middle class when suburban and other more affluent communities became accessible residences. She states,

Traditional black communities, like the one I grew up in, which had always included everyone, all classes, were changed by the end of the seventies. Folks with money took their money out of the community. Local black-owned business all but ceased with the exception of the undertakers. Exercising their equal rights as citizens, black folks began to live, and most importantly, to shop, everywhere, seemingly not noticing the changes in predominately black communities. These changes happened all over the United States. By the early nineties, the black poor and underclass were fast becoming isolated segregated communities. Big business, in the form of a booming drug trade, infiltrated these communities and let addiction and the violence it breeds and sustains chip away and ultimately erode the overall well-being of the poor, and working-class black folks left.<sup>49</sup>

Both Hooks and Marable describe the decline of the inner-city black community that is an essential factor necessary for gentrification. They describe and document the erosion of communities and what would eventually depreciate land values and the quality of life to a point that only the people who cannot afford to leave are left in these blighted communities. It is at that point when real estate appraisals for aging and structures in a state of disrepair are at a market low, giving way to a sizable profit for real estate speculators who see the potential for a demographic shift and a repopulation of the area. After the complete decline of the inner-city black community comes a rebirth, but not for the poorer indigenous residents but for its new higher property tax paying gentrifiers.

Hooks and Marable describe the class conflict that occurs in the inner city, but the poor are not the only group to be displaced by gentrification. Loretta Lees author of the article, *Super-Gentrification: The Case of Brooklyn Heights, New York City*, documents

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49. Bell Hooks, *Where We Stand*, 93.

the displacement of the middle-class by the wealthy in an exclusive part of Brooklyn, New York. Lees' definition of gentrification expands the class elements beyond the traditional concept of the poor displaced by the wealthy, or the inner city being the only site for gentrification. Lees' definition of gentrification examines the possibility that displacement due to gentrification can happen anywhere and to anyone who resides in a community that a wealthier group finds desirable. Lees defines gentrification as: "Moreover academics no longer restrict the term 'gentrification' to processes located in the city centre. Increasingly, they also use it to describe similar changes in the suburbs and even rural areas."<sup>50</sup>

Lees also gives attention to the notion that gentrification is another stage in a constantly transforming urban landscape. This idea does not negate the painful effects for the displaced families and individuals and families, but it raises the point of a constantly changing community. Even in so called stable middle-class communities, families mature and change. Children who were once infants eventually go to college, once young newly married couples eventually retire and move. The idea of a constantly evolving community is captured in this statement: "As Chris Hamnett argued some time ago now: It should be clear that gentrification is merely another stage in a continuing historically contingent sequence of residential area evolution. There are no universally and temporarily stable residential patterns."<sup>51</sup> What should be taken from this finding is

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50. Loretta Lees, "Super-gentrification: The Case of Brooklyn Heights, New York City," *Urban Studies*.40, no. 12 (November 2003), 2490.

51. *Ibid.*, 2491



that change, both demographically and physically, are constant but no less painful for those who are adversely affected.

Lees describes a community, Brooklyn Heights that was once a working class neighborhood of landlords and renters, as it evolves into a community of international millionaires and exclusive multi-level one-family brownstone homes. Lees charts the transformation of this community from multi-family brownstone buildings that were once home to up to four different families, to mini-three-story mansions complete with hot tubs, gyms, and saunas where only a family of three people now reside. Loretta Lees quotes urban expert Neil Smith in his analysis of globalization and gentrification:

Neil Smith argues that the 'hallmark of this latest phase of gentrification' is the 'reach of global capital down to the local neighborhood scale.' The relationships among global economic processes, local places and communities are nowhere more obvious than in the super-gentrification of Brooklyn Heights. Closely tied, through the labour market, to global financial markets, super-gentrifying neighborhoods like Brooklyn Heights are peculiarly positioned global spaces/ places. While it is important to recognize the specificity of its location within the global space economy, there is no reason to assume that the process of super-gentrification at play in Brooklyn Heights is totally unique to it.<sup>52</sup>

One should consider globalism as a dominant factor in Brooklyn Heights due to the fact that these transformed million-dollar homes are now owned by wealthy European (English and Russian) investment gurus.

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52. Ibid., 2489.

### CHAPTER III

#### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The phrase *indigenous residents*, was coined in this research to describe the original residents of pre-gentrified communities. The term *indigenous resident* shares a connotation with aboriginal people of colonized nations. This is done purposely, whenever colonization by western nations occurred the indigenous or original residents were relocated from the most desirable land to areas that were perceived to have less value and potential for profitability. The term *indigenous resident* is used to evoke a comparison of the aboriginal people of colonized lands who have suffered displacement, and the original residents of gentrified communities who have also experienced displacement.

The plight of the indigenous residents is seldom discussed in literature that focuses on gentrification or the effects of gentrification. The indigenous residents of pre-gentrified communities and their concerns often escape the attention of the public because of the socioeconomic class of the indigenous residents (that is almost always lower than that of the gentrifying new arrivals). There is a common perception that gentrification occurs in communities that are the lowest income communities within the city limits; however, this perception is often incorrect. The poorest communities are often overlooked by new residents and real estate agents looking for potentially

profitable “new housing” markets. This observation is supported in the passage from Loretta Lees, Tom Slayter, and Elvin Wyly:

Although we might expect gentrification to begin where the gap is greatest – where the potential for profit is maximized—in most cities gentrification follows a different path: it often begins in a relatively depressed, devalorized, working-class part of the city—but not the absolute epicenter of the region’s worst poverty and disinvestment.<sup>1</sup>

### Ground Rent and the Rent Gap Theory

In order to completely understand why gentrification occurs in areas adjacent to the most poverty stricken communities and not in the poorest communities, attention must be given to the theories of *ground rent* and *the rent gap*. The concept of impoverished residents occupying valuable tracts of land near the central business district may support the perceived need for urban revitalization. However, when the disinvestment that occurs in working poor ethnic communities due to the egress of the middle class, emerges the difference between the ground rent and the potential ground rent (after gentrification) becomes greater. The dollar amount a landowner can receive for a structure in a pre-gentrified blighted community otherwise known as ground rent cannot compare to the potential ground rent amount that is substantially higher in revitalized communities. The difference between ground rent and potential ground rent may be an indicator of the possibility of gentrification based on the level of disinvestment in a community and the potential for profit maximization from an elevated ground rent. Lees, Slayter, and Wyly posit that:

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1. Loretta Lees, Tom Slayter, and Elvin Wyly, *Gentrification* (New York: Routledge, Taylor Francis Group, 2008), 58.

The disinvestment dynamic explains the apparent contradiction of poverty-ridden inner-city across so much of the developed world—the paradox of poor people living on valuable land in the heart of large, vibrant cities. Ground rent capitalized under an existing land use falls further below the growth, and technology-driven increasing potential that could be captured under the optimal, highest, and best use, for instance if the land could be used for potential ground rent is the rent gap, and it is fundamental of the production of gentrified landscapes. As (Neil) Smith puts it, ‘Only when this gap emerges can gentrification be expected since if the present use succeeded in capitalizing all or most of the ground rent, little economic could be derived from redevelopment.’ Changing the land use, so that a landowner can chase the ever rising curve of potential ground rent, can involve wholesale redevelopment on a neighborhood scale: Gentrification occurs when the gap is wide enough that developers can purchase shells cheaply, can pay builder’s cost and profit for rehabilitation, can pay interest or mortgage and construction loans, and can sell the end product for a sale price that leaves a satisfactory return to the developer. The entire ground, or a large portion of it, is now capitalized: the neighborhood has been recycled and begins a new cycle of use.<sup>2</sup>

The notion that cities are spatially fixed and permanent is inaccurate and unrealistic. The urban arena is an ever changing, evolving, and shifting in land use patterns and experiences constant redevelopment. The concepts of *ground rent* and *potential ground rent* become vital in explaining the redevelopment and gentrification as a result of redevelopment. They may also explain why gentrification primarily occurs in working class communities instead of the poorest communities. Again, Lees, Slayter, and Wyly comment,

The rent gap suggest that gentrification provides one way to increase capitalized ground rent on parcels that have been devaloized by obsolete land use and years of suburbanization. One of the major debates over the rent gap, however, has involved the empirical observation that gentrification often begins not in the very poorest districts, but areas just a bit better off – for instance, mixed working – class and poor neighborhoods that are not far from downtown employment centers, and not too isolated from remaining middle-class enclaves in the central city. Hammel suggests that geographic scale might explain this anomaly.

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2. Ibid., 54.

Capitalized ground rent for an individual parcel is influenced by neighborhood effects- by the social, unsatisfied, and physical circumstances of surrounding land uses. Thus, a land parcel may have an enormous rent gap when its capitalized ground rent is measured against a steadily rising potential ground rent at the metropolitan scale, but redevelopment will only be feasible if the negative barriers at the neighborhood scale can be overcome. In the case of Chicago, gentrification in the 1960s and 1970s began not in the city's poorest, heavily disinvested South Side, but closer to downtown in a smaller pocket of disinvestment on the Near North Side. But over the years, gentrification has expanded around all sides of the downtown core, while the Chicago Housing Authority has used federal funds to demolish many low-income public housing projects and disperse the residents to the private rental market. In short, the neighborhood scale has begun to change dramatically, and now new luxury homes are sprouting across Chicago's South Side. Some neighborhood effects persist, however: real and received concerns about crime on the South Side promoted this developer to assure prospective buyers that the building security system is linked to the police department 24 hours a day.<sup>3</sup>

The previous assessment establishes the importance of the theories of ground rent and potential ground rent in addition to the fact that gentrification does not initially occur in the poorest communities. However, the most captivating factor is the demolition of public housing with the notion that the former displaced tenants who may also be referred to as *indigenous residents* will find housing in the private market. This rapid and instantaneous displacement of indigenous residents nullifies the traditional stage models of gentrification replacing the model with a rapid form of displacement of indigenous residents termed by the researcher of this study as accelerated displacement due to gentrification.

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3. Ibid., 60.

### The Stage Models of Gentrification

Before the theory of accelerated displacement due to gentrification can be fully examined a review of the theory of stage models of gentrification and its relevance to the displacement of indigenous residents must take place. The theory of the stage models of gentrification explain the phenomenon of gentrification in detail, concentrating on the longitudinal effects of gentrification on a community. The stage models of gentrification have three main stages that describe the both the spatial and demographic change of a gentrified community over the time span from the primary stages of gentrification to the final stages and effects of gentrification. The stage models of gentrification most importantly chronicle the displacement of indigenous residents over from the inception to the completion.

The first stage of gentrification is commonly referred to as the first group of newcomers to arrive in the pre-gentrified community, and is universally known as the *risk-prone* or *risk-oblivious* stage. The *risk-prone* or *risk-oblivious* stage can best be defined as,

A small group of risk-oblivious people move in and renovate properties for their own use. Little public attention is given to renovation at this stage, and little displacement occurs because the newcomers often take housing that is vacant or part of the normal market turnover in what is often an extremely soft market. This pioneer group accepts the risk of such a move.

Sweat equity and, private capital are used almost exclusively, since the conventional mortgage funds are unavailable. This first stage is well under way before it receives any public recognition, although even at this early stage the grapevine is spreading the word. The first efforts are concentrated in very small areas, often two or three blocks. The first group of newcomers usually contains a

significant number of design professionals or artist who have the skill, time, and ability to undertake extensive rehabilitation.<sup>4</sup>

The risk-prone stage of gentrification has the least amount (if any) displacement of indigenous residents. The risk-prone gentrifying group may contain recent college graduates, artists and musicians, and members of the gay and lesbian community. The risk-prone gentrifiers are least likely to object to having neighbors of a different socioeconomic class, race, or ethnicity. Gay and lesbian gentrifiers are viewed as being the most tolerant and accepting of indigenous residents, it is the risk prone stage of gentrification that has the greatest chance of harmonious relations between the new arrivals and the original residents. This may be a result in part due to the fact that gay and lesbian communities are in fact safe havens from prejudice and discrimination from the larger heterosexual society. Gay and lesbians are often described as primary gentrifiers because they are often the first of the risk-prone group to arrive in a community as gentrifiers. Lees, Slayter, and Wyly posit that,

Gay men are often seen to be pioneer gentrifiers, along with artist. Gay gentrification is seen to be an emancipatory, critical social practice, and the gay gentrified neighborhood is constructed by various authors to be an oasis of tolerance that satisfies the need for a place and belonging. Anonymity in the city is useful, and city dwellers have come to expect a certain amount of interaction with, and toleration of 'alien' groups.<sup>5</sup>

The risk-prone group of gentrifiers is viewed by most urban residents as living a bohemian lifestyle that may also be a function of youth and sexual orientation. This

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4. Ibid., 31-33.

5. Ibid., 213.

youthful lifestyle favors a high level of tolerance and appreciation of diversity. However, this acceptance of diversity is not shared by the risk-neutral and risk-adverse groups.

Lees, Slayter, and Wyly state, "For example, pioneer gentrifiers desired social mixing, whereas second, and especially third-wave gentrifiers, are much more individualistic.

However, arguably it is pioneer gentrifiers who initiate processes of displacement, even if this is not a deliberate behavior."<sup>6</sup>

The second group or stage of gentrifiers known synonymously as the *risk-neutral* or *second-wave* gentrifiers, arrive immediately after and sometimes during later stages of the risk-prone group. The risk-neutral stage encompasses the continued influx of young recent college graduates, gay and lesbian home buyers, and artists and musicians (mostly white). However, it is this stage that brings the arrival of young families, or couples with one child that may be a toddler or newborn seeking a starter home that may in need of repair. The community starts to respond to these newcomers with small shops and businesses that cater to the gentrifiers, it should be mentioned that these same businesses may be less than welcoming to the indigenous residents who may start to feel out of place. Lees, Slayter, and Wyly found the following:

A few more of the same type of people move in and fix up houses for their own use. Subtle promotional activities are begun, often by a few realtors. Small-scale speculators may renovate a few houses in visible locations for resale or rental. Rarely does a large speculator come in at this stage, because capital for investors and residents is still scarce. Those who come in at this stage seek units that are relatively easy to acquire—vacant buildings owned by absentee landlords, city owned or tax-foreclosed properties.

Some displacement occurs as vacant housing becomes scarce. Those who come in stages one and two will later be considered the old timers in this new

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6. Ibid., 195.



neighborhood. If the neighborhood is to have its name changed, it happens at this stage. New boundaries are identified this stage. New boundaries are identified, and the media begin to pay attention to the Area . . . In some neighborhoods mortgage money becomes available, but the loan is more often secured by other property, given by the seller, or given for a relatively low percentage of the total investment. Renovation spreads to adjacent blocks.<sup>7</sup>

The risk neutral stage of gentrification witnesses the start of the displacement of indigenous residents. The real estate market sees the evaporation of vacant properties and structures that are listed for sale on the market are quickly purchased by speculators and developers. It is well worth mentioning that tensions between the gentrifiers and the indigenous residents arise during this stage. The perception of scarce properties and the working poor occupying homes that are valued above market prices, increases competition for the scarce inner-city spaces.

The third stage of gentrification brings the arrival of gentrifiers who are more sensitive to the demographic makeup of communities and tend to favor homogeneous over diverse communities. The *risk-adverse* stage or *third-wave* of gentrification marks the arrival of wealthy urban professionals. Upscale stores and eateries are brought in to appeal to the new arrivals. This community is now considered to be self-contained, there are now plenty of grocery stores, coffee shops, dry cleaners, expensive clothing boutiques, and every flavor for the discriminating diner is within walking distance of this newly fashioned community. However, the community is now unrecognizable to the indigenous residents who feel more than un-wanted, as they are now viewed as blocking the revitalization of a community. The gentrified community is now becoming

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7. Ibid., 32.

unaffordable to all but the targeted and desired population that purchases the refurbished houses and condominiums as well as the brand new structures that are designed to appeal to those who know and seek the latest and most fashionable architectural trends. Lees, Slayter, Wyly note the following:

At this stage major media or official interest is directed to the neighborhoods. The pioneers may continue to be important in shaping the process, but they are not the only important ones. Urban renewal may begin . . . or a developer . . . may move in. Individual investors who restore or renovate housing for their own use continue to buy into the neighborhood. The trend is set for the kind of rehabilitation activity that will dominate. Physical improvements become even more visible because of their volume and because of the general improvement they make to the whole area. Prices begin to escalate rapidly. Displacement continues . . . The arrivals in this third stage include increasing numbers of people who see the housing as an investment in addition to being a place to live. These newer middle-class residents begin to organize their own groups to change the character of the pioneers' organization.

The organized community turns outward to promote the neighborhood to other middle-class people and to make demands for public resources. It turns inward to exert peer influence on neighborhoods and to shape community life. Tensions between old residents and the gentry begin to emerge. Social service institutions and subsidized housing are resisted with a passion. Protective or defensive actions against crime are taken. If the new residents, especially the most recent arrivals, are less tolerant of lower or working class behavior, these tensions become more serious.<sup>8</sup>

The risk-adverse stage of gentrification brings about the greenlining of the gentrified community. The profit seeking motive now consumes the financial and banking thrifts that are willing and able to extend business loans, home improvement loans, and finance large scale real-estate developments. The indigenous residents who have managed to survive the first two stages of gentrification however, are viewed as not credit worthy. The homes of indigenous residents are viewed as prime real estate. Even

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8. Ibid., 32.

though they have resided in this community longer than any of the new arrivals, the indigenous residents are seen as squatters in their own community. The gentrified community is now viewed as being made safe for young middle and upper-middle class professionals.

There is also a fourth stage of gentrification that is often described as being an extension of the risk-adverse stage, however it is distinct in some descriptions of gentrification because of the particular type of risk-adverse gentrifier who moves in to the community in this final stage. These types of gentrifiers can best be described as upper-level management and financial professionals. Near racial and socioeconomically homogeneous communities are not a preference, but a requirement. It is at this stage that any underdeveloped spaces are swept up by investors with the high incomes that can afford the exclusive and exclusionary prices. Lees, Slayter, and Wyly describe Stage Four as,

One in which, a larger number of properties are gentrified, and the middle class continues to come. What is significant about the new residents is that more are from the business and managerial middle class than from the professional middle class . . . Efforts may be made to win historic district designation or to obtain other stringent public controls to reinforce the private investment that has taken place.

Buildings that have been held for speculation appear on the market... Small, specialized retail and professional services or commercial activity begin to emerge, especially if the neighborhood is located near the downtown or a major institution. Rapid price and rent spirals are set off. Displacement now affects not only renters but some home owners as well. Additional neighborhoods in the city are being discovered to meet the increasing demand of the middle class. While some controversy emerges, especially related to displacement, relatively little is done to dampen middle-class reinvestment.<sup>9</sup>

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9. Ibid., 33.

The stage model of gentrification theory omits what may be considered a fourth or fifth stage that has been called super-gentrification. This stage is by no means automatic in every gentrified community and although it is rare, it has been observed in the largest cities such as Los Angeles, Chicago, London, and New York. Loretta Lees defines the theory of super-gentrification as,

The transformation of already gentrified, prosperous and solidly upper-middle-class neighborhoods into much more exclusive and expansive enclaves. This intensified regentrification is happening in a few select areas of global cities like London and New York that have become the focus of intense investment and conspicuous consumption by a new generation of super-rich 'financiers' fed by fortunes from the global finance and corporate service industries.<sup>10</sup>

The theory of super-gentrification supports the notion of the urban landscape and demographic patterns as being in a constant state of change. The combination of capitalist market-driven revitalization, urban governing regimes, the housing preferences of the middle and upper-middle-classes, cause a continued push for structural and population changes in cities. Use of the term "evolution" is resisted because the process of constant change in the urban landscape evolves the displacement of the working poor residents in favor of wealthier, higher tax paying middle class potential home buyers. The city can never be considered static or permanent in its physical, class, racial, and ethnic qualities. Chris Hammett describes the fluidity of the city in these terms: "It should be clear that gentrification is merely another stage in a continuing historically

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10. Loretta Lees, "Super-gentrification: The Case of Brooklyn Heights, New York, City," *Journal of Urban Studies* 40, no. 12 (November 2003): 2487.

contingent sequence of residential area evolution. There are no universally and temporally stable residential patterns.”<sup>11</sup>

The stage model of gentrification theory describes gentrification as a process of population changes over a period of time. However, it does not describe the motivation to gentrify the inner city and why the middle-class, who fled to suburbia to escape the perceived perils of the inner-city, is seeking to return. The theory of *revanchism* by Neil Smith provides an explanation for the ‘back to the city movement’ of the gentry and their willingness to abandon the class and racial homogeneity of the suburbs and exurbs for the inner-city. The following statement on revanchism was made by Smith:

It was all a reaction against the supposed ‘theft’ of the city, a desperate defense of a challenged phalanx of privileges cloaked in the populist language of civic morality, family values and neighborhood security. Just as the bourgeois order was perceived as under threat by the revanchist of 1890s France, in 1990s New York, Smith explained that white middle-class assumptions about civil society retrench as a narrow set of social norms against which everyone else is dangerously wanting. A particular, exclusionary vision of civil society was being reinstated with a vengeance, and Smith introduced us to this contemporary revanchism and its geography of exclusion.<sup>12</sup>

Neil Smith’s theory of revanchism explains more than the ‘back to the city’ movement of ex-suburbanites, it also explains the anger and fears of the middle-classes that were heightened by a difficult economic period. During the recession of the early 1990s, attention and criticism was directed at the recipients of entitlement programs as well as the theories that promoted these policies and programs. There is a fear of the working poor in inner-cities who are assigned blame for urban decay and the blight of the

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11. Ibid., 2491.

12. Lees, Slayter, and Wyly, *Gentrification*, 223.

inner-city. This hatred of those on the lower strata of the socioeconomic scale is instigated by conservative critics who label social programs as being dangerously socialist and redistributing wealth to those who do not deserve it. As noted by Lees, Slayter, and Wyly,

Two important factors fueled the fire of revanchism, first was the rapid collapse of 1980s optimism into the bleak prospects of the early 1990s recession, which triggered unprecedented anger amongst the white middle classes. Smith demonstrates that such anger needed a target on which to exercise revenge, and the easiest target was the subordinated, marginalized populations of the inner city. The following sentence explains that more than anything, the revanchist city expresses a race/class/ gender terror felt by middle and ruling-class whites who are suddenly stuck in place by a ravaged property market, the threat and reality of unemployment, the decimation of social services, the emergence of minority and immigrant groups, as well as women, as powerful urban actors. Second, Smith states that revanchism is 'screamingly reaffirmed' by symbolic representations of urban malaise in television and the media in 'an obsessive portrayal of the violence and danger of everyday life' in the city. Such is the influence of these anti-urban reproductions of paranoia and fear that they have amplified and aggravated the paranoia and fear among large swathes of middle-class urban and suburban voters seeking scapegoats for their unease in public spaces and city streets.<sup>13</sup>

Smith's theory of revanchism and its intent reflected in the promotion of gentrification and public policies that target the working poor are also explained by the feminist/author Bell Hooks. Hooks describes an anti-working poor sentiment that may provide an insight into the theory of revanchism with regards to socioeconomic class and class conflict. The act of advocacy with the poor is exceptionally difficult in economically perilous times due economic instability and the accompanying fear that transcends all socioeconomic classes. To align one-self with the poor during 'hard-times' is akin to alienating the middle and upper-classes. President Lyndon Johnson's "great

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13. Ibid., 223.

society” as well as the ‘welfare state’ have come under attack in an era of neo-conservatism that views any policies that focus on the working poor with disdain.

Bell Hooks describes the uphill battle that the poor face legislatively and socially in the post President Regan society. The following quote states the anxiety that promotes revanchist attitudes.

As the gap between rich and poor intensifies in this society, those voices that urge solidarity with the poor are often drowned out by mainstream conservative voices that deride, degrade, and devalue the poor. Lack of concern for the poor is all the more possible when voices on the left ignore this reality while focusing primary attention on the machination of the powerful. We need a concerned left politics that continues to launch powerful critique of ruling class groups even as it also attends to the issues of strategic assault and demoralization of the poor, a politics that can effectively intervene on class warfare.<sup>14</sup>

Hooks describes a classist philosophy that promotes the invisibility of the working poor and the dominant ideology of the wealthier classes. With this notion of the working poor in mind, it becomes easier to understand the middle-class revanchist attitudes that view the displacement of the indigenous residents a natural consequence of urban renewal. The devaluation of the poor promotes the pattern of thought that views poorer residents as obstacles to the improvement and rescue of the inner-city. The devaluation of the poor is accompanied by the belief that the gentry are the rightful and true residents of the inner-city and the urban landscape decayed due to the occupancy of the working poor. However, the revanchist notions of the middle class does not consider the disinvestment of the inner-city communities by urban governing regimes, and

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14. Bell Hooks, *Where We Stand*, 46.

particularly by banking and lending institutions that redline these pre-gentrified communities.

Although the plight of the indigenous residents involves the disinvestment of governing regimes and their devaluation and even dehumanization by the middle-class and media which may manifest in revanchist attitudes and policies, the role of the urban governing regime theory as mentioned earlier cannot be ignored. The process of gentrification as described in the theory of stage models of gentrification does not initially begin with the cooperation or consent of elected officials or banking and real estate interest. However, by the end of the risk-neutral or second stage the involvement of urban governing regimes in the process of gentrification is undeniable.

Urban governing regime theory may explain the restructuring of inner-city communities that are often planned and approved by local zoning boards, and promoted by real estate developers. The public and private collusion that forms the power base of urban governing regimes tends to ignore poor citizens and the indigenous residents who are viewed as barriers to urban redevelopment. The public governing side of urban regimes that is comprised of elected and appointed officials also contains bureaucracies that serve the public interest by implementing and evaluating public policy. There may be an institutional bias within the public sector of urban governing regimes that is difficult if not impossible for indigenous residents to successfully oppose. Clarence Stone details this bias when he posits that,

Throughout, but especially in the provision of routine services, researchers find little evidence of a class bias in the allocation decision of administrative agencies. Instead they find 'unpatterned inequalities.' Yet while it is clear that class is by



no means the only factor at work in service delivery, there is substantial evidence that the clients social position does indeed have an impact. The systemic-power argument directs us to the phase of service delivery where class is a factor. A puzzling feature of findings about 'unpatterned inequalities' and administrative is how to account for the higher level of dissatisfaction with service delivery among lower-income and minority groups. Why does level of satisfaction with and trust in government vary with social status? One possible answer is that lower-status attitudes, and this is that lower-status clients are treated differently.

Much of the unpatterned inequality in service delivery concerns agency decisions about the location of physical facilities, the allocation of dollars, or the frequency of response to service demands. It does not concern the actual behavior of individual service deliverers interacting with clients. It is at this interpersonal level of decision making that a class bias becomes evident, and differences in social position and life style have an impact. One close student of bureaucratic decision rulers concludes: Street level bureaucrats develop stereotypes which suggest that lower class citizens are less deserving of a service or that attempts to deliver services to them will be unsuccessful. Consequently, the foot soldiers give low priority to delivering services to lower class clients. The result is that although agency decision rulers produce 'unpatterned inequalities,' individual decision rules create 'patterned inequalities.'<sup>15</sup>

A huge leap in logic is not needed to understand the relationship between the bureaucratic prejudices and biases that favor the wealthier clients over the working poor and the institutional biases that favor new-arrival gentrifiers over the indigenous residents. According to Stone, the "patterned inequalities" that may hinder the poorer segments arises in an almost organic fashion resulting from societal biases against the working poor. These inequalities are institutionalized within the city bureaucracy and surface in interpersonal relationships and also in inter-group relations as well. It must be considered that the indigenous residents who are the working poor and are the clear majority of the pre-gentrified community do not receive the best treatment from civil servants and the bureaucracy, and the attitudes and disposition toward a community

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15. Clarence Stone, *Power in the City, Clarence Stone and the Politics of Inequality*, ed. Marion Orr and Valerie C. Johnson (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2008), 46.

changes as more new-arrival gentrifiers settle in the community, then the 'patterned inequalities' favor the wealthy and may be a contributing factor encouraging gentrification.

The "patterned inequalities" that the indigenous residents experience may be the result of the institutional biases against the working poor, but these inequalities become a major contributor to tensions between the indigenous residents and the gentrifiers. The researcher of this work once overheard a long term resident and homeowner in the East Lake community of Atlanta complain about the preferential treatment the gentrifiers received. This black male homeowner who was retirement age complained in a newly built big chain grocery store:

Damn I was born and raised in Atlanta and have owned my house for over thirty years, this 'big time' grocery store never considered locating here when it was just us living here, but now that they come in here with their fancy cars and big bank loans, the red carpet gets rolled out for them. Sh-t man when I have more garbage than the can will hold they don't come out but once a week, but damn if the city don't come a running in the new garbage truck if 'the man's' trash is overflowing!

This sentiment may be the result of perception and resentment, but the indigenous residents do definitely experience the "patterned inequality" that Clarence Stone states as a factor in urban governing regime theory. The indigenous residents who are the working poor have had a lifelong experience with inequality both personally and institutionally, they understand and are immediately able to recognize 'patterned inequalities'.

Stone's theory of urban governing regimes uses a community decision making model that may also explain the bias against the working poor and specifically the indigenous residents. There is a class sensitive nature of urban regimes that definitely

does not favor citizens in the lower-income strata. The interest and concerns of the working poor residents are considered as having to compete with the interest of the wealthier residents for the attention of governing officials (both elected and appointed). Governing officials make decisions from the perspective of risk and reward, the rewards for representing the middle and the upper-middle classes in almost all cases outweigh any considerations of the working poor. Policy responsiveness by definition is, "the changes in city government that respond to minority interest. It is the responsiveness to the interest of minority groups in the distribution of benefits."<sup>16</sup> Stone describes the lack of policy responsiveness for the working poor and indigenous residents as a result of the priorities of governing officials:

The class character of community decision making does not result from a conscious calculation. Rationality is a function of the parts rather than the whole. What I shall elaborate below is the argument that because officials operate in a stratified system, they find themselves rewarded for cooperating with upper-strata interest and unrewarded or even penalized for cooperating with lower-strata interest. In selective ways described later, public officials experience strategic dependencies predisposing them to favor upper-over-lower strata interest. Thus some groups are in a position to receive official cooperation, while others encounter substantial resistance. Put another way, different strata operate from different footings and therefore face different opportunity cost.<sup>17</sup>

The preceding facts are not intended to portray the plight of the indigenous residents and the working poor as hopeless, nor is there an intention to portray the displacement of indigenous residents as an eventuality. The difficulties in publicizing the

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16. Rufus P. Browning, Dale Rogers Marshall, and David H. Tabb, *Protest is Not Enough: The Struggle of Blacks and Hispanics for Equality in Urban Politics* (Berkeley, CA: University Press of California, 1984), 24-25.

17. Stone, *Power in the City*, 34.

interest and concerns of the indigenous residents and the working poor who are often the invisible victims of gentrification, it is vital from a human rights perspective and also provides a balanced analysis of gentrification.

### **The Theories of Revanchism and the Emancipatory City**

The theory of the revanchist city states that the city has to be reclaimed from the savage lower classes by the civilizing new arrival gentrifiers. This theory is based on class conflict and class inequality, it views those citizens that are outside of what is considered the norm or mainstream America. As stated earlier, ethnic and racial minorities, immigrants, and the working poor, are openly blamed for the decline of the inner-city. The concepts of redlining and disinvestment in the inner-city by urban governing regimes and banking and financial interest are not raised within the theory of revanchism.

The revanchist theory focuses on the gentrifier and dismisses the indigenous residents as hindering the rebirth of potentially vital communities. The theory of the revanchism, which is conflict based, is not singular in its redemptive view of gentrification. The theory of the emancipatory city is similar to the revanchist city in that they both view the new-arrival gentrifiers as a redemptive force for the inner-city. The theory of the emancipatory city portrays gentrification as a positive force that is equally beneficial for the new-arrival and older residents alike. Loretta Lees, Tom Slayter, and Elvin Wyly define the theory of the emancipatory city in the following statement:

Gentrification is seen to be a process which unites people in the central city, and creates opportunities for social interaction, tolerance, and cultural diversity.

Gentrification is seen to be a liberating experience for both gentrifiers and those who came into contact with them. Caulfield's analysis of pioneer gentrification in Toronto, Canada, focuses on the inner city as an emancipatory space and gentrification as a 'critical social practice,' which defines as 'efforts by human beings to resist institutionalized patterns of dominance and suppressed possibility.' For Caulfield, then, (pioneer) gentrification is a reaction to the repressive institutions of the suburbs, and it is a process that creates tolerance. By resettling old inner-city neighborhoods, Caulfield argues that gentrifiers subvert the dominance of hegemonic culture and create new conditions for social activities, leading the way for the developers to follow.<sup>18</sup>

The emancipatory city theory presents gentrification a force that brings diversity and multi-cultural influences to the inner-city. Older decaying structures now may attract trendy gay gentrifiers, college professors, and eventually doctors, lawyers, and investment bankers. The potential for new uses of old inner-city buildings brings new wealthier residents with the investment dollars to turn old dated structures into historic buildings with trendy uptown residents. The emancipatory city theory describes gentrification as an opportunity for "encounters between 'different' people in the city are enjoyable and inherently liberating."<sup>19</sup>

There is a diminished description of the negative effects of gentrification, the emancipatory city presents the cheerfully positive perception of gentrification that all but ignores the plight of the indigenous residents in favor of welcoming new wealthier residents to the inner city. Lees, Slayter, and Wyly document this phenomenon,

That a number of individuals have lost affordable apartments that were home to them cannot be denied. Yet increases in the number of affluent and well educated residents is plainly good for cities, on balance, by increasing the number

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18. Lees, Slayter, and Wyly, *Gentrification*, 209.

19. Ibid.

of residents who can pay taxes, purchase local goods and services, and support the city in state and federal political processes. My contention here goes somewhat further: gentrification is good on balance for the poor and ethnic minorities. The most negative effect of gentrification, the reduction in affordable housing, results primarily not from gentrification itself, but from the persistent failure of government to produce or secure affordable housing more generally. Moreover, cities that attract more affluent residents are more able to aggressively finance affordable housing. Thus, gentrification is entitled to "two cheers", if not three, given that it enhances the political and economic positions of all, but exacerbates the harms imposed on the poor by the failures of national affordable housing policies.<sup>20</sup>

The aforementioned observation is critical of both the federal and local governments for the lack of affordable housing. However, this statement which focuses blame for the lack of affordable housing on the public sector, does not consider urban governing regimes and the collaboration between the public and private sectors. The demolition of public housing communities in Atlanta was carried out by the Atlanta Housing Authority (AHA) and the land which was federally owned was sold to private developers who erected mixed income communities. This is an excellent example of locally appointed officials working with local real estate developers who are razing public housing communities and building master planned developments, with the demolition of the public housing units subsidized by the federal government.

The analysis of the emancipatory city presents the interaction between people of different classes, races, ethnicities, and sexual preferences as always peaceful and pleasurable encounters that leave both sides elated and fulfilled. The emancipatory city theory only acknowledges displacement as a minimal cost or externality that must be endured to achieve a truly livable city. A more realistic analysis using the stage model of

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20. Ibid., 196.

gentrification theory states that: "Pioneer gentrifiers desired social mixing, whereas second- and especially third-wave gentrifiers are much more individualistic, who compare first-, second-, and third-wave. However, arguably it is pioneer gentrifiers who initiate processes of displacement, even if this is not a deliberate behavior."<sup>21</sup>

The emancipatory city theory operates on the assumption that class and racial differences never develop into class and racial tensions or conflicts. This theory assumes that all encounters between people with drastically different life experiences and incomes will be uplifting expose the poor to a better life. This better life will come in the form of employment providing services to their wealthier neighbors. Loretta Lees, Tom Slayter, and Elvin Wyly detail this heavily optimistic view of the benefits of gentrification in the emancipatory city:

At the simplest level, existing residents should find expanding employment opportunities in providing locally the goods and services that more affluent residents can afford. Studies suggest that poor people can find better employment in the suburbs than the city. The problem has been that inner city residents cannot reach these suburban jobs because of distance and the lack of a necessary automobile. While one may be concerned that jobs generated by gentrifiers often will be low-paying, unskilled positions in restaurants and shops, existing residents may need opportunities that do not require much education... Gentrification may also contribute to citywide enhancement of employment for low-income residents. Increases in urban populations will enhance demand for municipal services and thus the need for municipal employment. They will also increase municipal tax receipts, making possible increases in public employment. Gentrification creates urban political fora in which affluent and poor citizens must deal with each other's priorities in a democratic process, and that gentrification ameliorates the social isolation of the poor, reduces crime, and increases the educational attainments of the poor.<sup>22</sup>

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21. Ibid., 195.

22. Ibid., 197.

While the previous statement is extremely optimistic pertaining to gentrification and all but ignores the displacement of the indigenous residents, it understates the plight of the working poor and the difficulties of being poor in a middle-class to upper middle-class community. The statement that the working poor will find employment serving the wealthy gentrifiers assumes that a person of a family will be able to exist in a gentrified community earning minimum wage.

This existence of minimum wage residents would be almost impossible without federally subsidized housing, which is often opposed by the new-arrival gentrifiers. The disappearance of low rent housing fuels the displacement of the indigenous poor and makes residing and working for minimum wage in a post gentrification community impossible.

The risk adverse stage of gentrification is distinct from the other stages by the strong preference for a homogeneous community, and there is little tolerance for those of a much lower income level and different cultural background. The emancipatory city theory ignores this fact and assumes that people of different educational levels, incomes, races, and ethnicities will all coexist if the working poor 'serve the rich'. There can be no assumption of coexistence if the tensions that arise from witnessing a community change from a familiar place, to one where the indigenous residents are not welcomed.

The emancipatory city theory is almost the opposite of the revanchist city theory, in that revanchism sees the working poor and the indigenous residents as having stolen the inner-city from its rightful affluent residents. However, the emancipatory city theory fails to acknowledge the hardships of the indigenous residents and the lack of resources



that start to disappear by the second stage or risk-neutral stage gentrification. The emancipator city theory like the revanchist city theory has no room for the indigenous poor with the difference being an unrealistic expectation of financial abilities of the working poor instead of the notion that the working poor do not belong in a gentrified community. The current trend of demolishing public housing communities, replacing them with mixed income developments is an example of revanchist city theory which sees the working poor indigenous residents as far less than desirable residents. It also is an example of the emancipatory city theory because of the mixed-income community that is erected in place of public housing becomes too expensive for the indigenous residents to remain in the community. The revanchist city theory and emancipatory city theory make the displacement of the indigenous residents an inevitability, on purpose under the revanchist city theory and by neglect under the emancipatory city theory.

## CHAPTER IV

### RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

Gentrification is often described, thought of and promoted as a redemptive force that reconfigures and revitalizes the inner-city. Gentrification often brings to mind the physical revitalization and rebirth of aging historic structures, and the re-entry of the middle class (often white) and eventually the upper-middle class which is followed by wealthier professionals. There is little mentioned in literature and in the media about the original residents that were present prior to gentrification and their plight prior to and after all of the stages of gentrification have occurred. Once attention is given to the original residents, also termed by the researcher as *indigenous residents*, questions arise pertaining to the condition of the pre-gentrified communities and why these communities are in decay and suffering from disinvestment and neglect. The answer to these questions along with the displacement of the indigenous residents forms the basis for the relevance of the study.

#### **An Analysis of Pre-Gentrified Communities**

The condition of pre-gentrified communities can be attributed to three factors: the flight of the middle-class to suburban communities, the disinvestment of the inner-city, and the practice of redlining. There is also the demolition of federally subsidized housing communities and the relocation/displacement of public housing residents. The existing

literature fails to link the demolition of public housing communities which are replaced by privately developed mixed income communities, to the process of gentrification which may eventually involve the demolition of obsolete non-historic structures which are replaced by trendy structures designed to fit the taste of the gentrifiers.

The differences between the traditional stage model of gentrification and the theory of rapid gentrification and the displacement due to rapid gentrification, can best be described by the use of a time line. The time lines compare both of the forms of displacement from the initial pre-stages to the final stages of a completely transformed community. Although the rapid displacement of indigenous residents happens in a much shorter time span, both models result in the vast majority of the indigenous resident's removal and absence from the community (see Tables 1 and 2).

Table 1. Traditional Stage Model of Gentrification Time Line

Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4	Stage 5	Stage 6
Pre-gentrification, the Redlining and Disinvestment of the community	Arrival of the Risk Prone Gentrifiers	Arrival of the Risk Neutral Gentrifiers	Businesses arrive that cater solely to the Gentrifiers, (this would include popular national and trendy chains).	Arrival of the Risk Adverse Gentrifiers (few if any of the indigenous residents remain in the community).	The community gains national popularity, becoming a haven for the wealthy elite, (housing can only be gained at premium prices).

Table 2. Rapid Displacement Time Line

Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4	Stage 5	Stage 6	Stage 7
Disinvestment and containment of the poor in federal housing communities	Local housing authority pursues rezoning and land conversion (with incentives from real estate	The public is informed of the strategic plan to redevelop federal housing community and relocate families	Families are relocated in accordance to the Uniform Relocation Act	Public housing community is razed	The land is rezoned and converted from federal to private ownership (private developers arrive)	Mixed income housing is built (the risk adverse arrive)

Any study of gentrification must begin with an historic analysis of the abandonment of some inner-city communities by the middle-class. When this event is framed in strict racial terms, it might be referred to as "white flight;" however, there is also the abandonment of inner-city communities by the black middle-class who also fled the population density and disinvestment of the inner-city for newer homes in the suburban communities. White flight and the departure of the middle-class from the inner-city is the inception of a cycle of urban decay and decline.

The departure of the white middle class from the inner-city has its origins in a desire to escape the city at a point when African Americans and Latino people were gaining political power. White flight was also made possible with the expansion of a federal highway system that made suburban living and possible for white professionals who were still employed in the central business districts. The white middle-class throughout the 1960s and 1970s were content to work in the downtown area, but resistant to residing in the inner-city where they would have to face the result of federal, state, and local disinvestment of the cities. The psychology of the white flight from the inner-city

and the lack of concern for those in the inner city are documented in the following statement:

Regardless of their origins, those who made homes for themselves in the suburbs generally held a common indifference to the people and problems of the city. The typical suburban resident, Carl Abbott observed in 1981, 'has no ties to the city, no sense of responsibility for its problems, and little need for its services that are duplicated in the main street of the regional shopping mall.' In the end, 'it seems clear that central cities are simply outside the daily orbit' of suburbanites. A decade later, such observations had become commonplace. In 1990, for instance urban theorist Mike Davis decried the 'suburban separation' he saw in the affluent areas around Los Angeles, while in 1992 Thomas and Mary Edsall similarly noted the rising independence and isolation of such suburbs across the nation. In their study of the New Jersey suburb of Mount Laurel, David Kirp, John Dwyer, and Larry Rosenthal likewise argued that the search for 'a better life' in suburbia entitled leaving the problems of the city behind. Pointedly [white suburbanites] have left the city as blacks have been moving in, the authors noted. The very last thing they want to do is assume responsibility for those they deliberately left behind.<sup>1</sup>

Kevin Kruse describes more than a middle class egress to what is perceived as a safe haven in the suburbs, he describes a mentality that is reflected in public policy by catering to the needs of the suburban resident over the needs of the urbanite. Federal and local transportation policy favored six lane highways over regionally accessible public transportation expansion. The Metro Atlanta Regional Transit Authority (MARTA) was initially intended to provide bus and rail transportation for the regional or metropolitan area of Atlanta, which included Fulton, DeKalb, Clayton, Cobb, and Gwinnett counties; however at the time this research was conducted, MARTA serves only Fulton and DeKalb counties. The reason behind the limited service of MARTA is far more than limited budgets and the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) and the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) failure to promote the importance MARTA to the Georgia

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1. Kevin M. Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 246.

State Legislature and to the individual county commissioners. MARTA was resisted in mass by the suburban residents who sought to preserve the exclusive nature of their suburban enclaves. Kruse indicates,

Likewise, a Gwinnett man claimed in 1993 that resistance to MARTA had nothing to do with race, although his arguments suggested otherwise. All the 'white flight' people moved to Gwinnett he said. 'These people have been sensitized to public transportation and the population of the inner city and moved away from it. It boils down to personal security.' Despite such protest to the contrary, many observers—white and black, urban and suburban—repeatedly identified racism as the key reason for the persistent resistance. 'The people you hear opposing MARTA in Cobb Gwinnett, they've been pretty open about it,' noted Rev. Joseph Lowry, a civil rights activist who had been on the transit system's board since 1975. 'They don't want black people coming into their areas. It's blind prejudice and fear.' Likewise, David Chestnut, the white chairman of MARTA, noted dejectedly in 1987 that the opposition to public transit had been 90 percent a racial issue. ('I am very disturbed,' he sighed, 'when I hear young professionals tell me they are going to form NNIG—No Niggers in Gwinnett.') A white Republican legislator from Gwinnett agreed with these views in 1993. 'Couple of years ago they had a vote on MARTA,' noted Mike Barnett, 'and you would be surprised what people will tell you. They will come up with 12 different ways of saying they are not racist in public. They try to be nice and tippy-toe around it. But you get them alone and behind a closed door and you see this old blatant racism that we have had here for quite some time.'<sup>2</sup>

Kevin Kruse's description of the resistance to public transportation in suburbia is far more than a racist fear of blacks and the working poor. The opposition to MARTA in the socioeconomic and racially homogeneous suburban enclaves represents the same reasoning that built these communities, which was a resistance the inner-city and its residents. The suburban white flight mind set is one of escape, it is an insistence that the inner-city is a place of risk to one's safety and property. The motivation behind white flight is reflected in the assumption that inner-city life is one of unpredictability and peril, the public schools are automatically substandard, the services are always poor and the

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2. Ibid., 250.

risk outweigh the benefits of city living. Escape and separation form the motivation for white flight and the thought of urban residency evokes thoughts of victimization by not just a criminal element, but also a black electorate and black urban government.

Kruse details the attitudes that contribute to and motivate white flight that manifest in the separatist attitudes displayed by residents of the northern suburbs of Atlanta with the following statement:

The suburbanite says to himself, 'The reason I worked so many years was to get away from pollution, bad schools and crime, and I'll be damned if I'll see it follow me.' Likewise, Joe Mack Wilson, later of the Cobb County seat of Marietta, summed up the secessionist attitude in 1975 with an appropriate image. Pointing to the Chattahoochee River which runs between the county and city, he tried to explain to an outsider to an outsider the worldview of his constituents. 'They love that river down there,' he said. 'They want to keep it as a moat. They wish they could build forts across to keep people from coming here.'<sup>3</sup>

The suburbanization of middle class took far more than property tax paying residents and their resources, it also took the funding of policies supported stable communities and allowed people of modest means to live in proximity with the middle class. White flight occurred during and after the post-civil rights and black power eras, and also coincided with the rise of black elected and appointed public officials. The loss of a large section of the urban middle class that fled the inner-city for the newly constructed homes and shopping mall of the suburbs and near rural environment of the exurbs, crippled inner-city communities that desperately needed funding in the recession of the late 1970s.

White flight was not the only variable that would contribute to inner-city disinvestment that is often a precursor to gentrification. The loss of the black middle

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3. Ibid., 247.

class stunted the growth and existence of stable black communities. Black communities, that traditionally had a demographically diverse population with regards to income, declined with the escape of the middle class who sought newer spacious suburban homes.

Traditional black communities, like the one I grew up in, which had always included everyone, all classes, were changed by the end of the seventies. Folks with money took their money out of the community. Local black-owned business all but ceased with the exception of the undertakers. Exercising their equal rights as citizens, black folks began to live, and most importantly, to shop, everywhere, seemingly not noticing the changes in predominantly black communities. These changes happened all over the United States. By the early nineties, the black poor and underclass were fast becoming isolated segregated communities.<sup>4</sup>

Bell Hooks accurately outlines the departure of the black middle class from traditional black communities which is often a precursor to gentrification, by stating that this departure spurs the decline of inner-city through the loss resources and the beginnings of disinvestment. It should also be mentioned that the departure of the stabilizing black middle class, was replaced by the illegal drug industry which was born during the 1980s and continued into the 1990s. According to Hooks: "Big business, in the form of a booming drug trade, infiltrated these communities and let addiction and the violence it breeds and sustains chips away and ultimately erode the overall well-being of the poor and working-class black folks left."<sup>5</sup>

Hooks chronicles the decline of inner-city black communities that also become sites of disinvestment, violence, and urban decay, and now are regarded as islands of urban blight adjacent to active central business districts. However the condition of these pre-gentrified communities cannot be blamed entirely on white flight and the

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4. Bell Hooks, *Where We Stand: Class Matters* (New York: Routledge Press, 2000), 93.

5. Ibid.



disappearance of the black middle class. The role of lending institutions and the practice of redlining is relevant to this study, giving attention to all of the factors that make conditions ripe for gentrification and the resulting displacement of the indigenous residents.

Pre-gentrified communities suffer from disinvestment by lending institutions and lending thrifts. Blighted inner city communities have few bank branches, but have no shortage of pawn shops, currency exchanges, and pay day lending and automobile title lending institutions. The Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) was conceived to require banks to undertake fair lending practices in communities where branches were located.

The CRA was proposed during the Carter Administration by Senator William Proxmire (D-Wisc.), whose primary purpose in enacting the legislation was to eliminate the practice of redlining. The bill focused on this practice because of the perceived unfairness of 'credit exportation,' whereby money was taken in the form of deposits, but lent to borrowers outside of the community.<sup>6</sup>

The obvious need for the CRA in pre-gentrified communities takes the form of affordable mortgages and home improvement loans for the indigenous residents in order to maintain and improve the existing homes and buildings. One of the observable differences between pre-gentrified and gentrified communities is the condition of the structures, with the pre-gentrified homes and buildings looking mostly in need of refurbishment and the gentrified structures looking well maintained if not new. This difference in appearance is the result of the availability of credit that the gentrifiers bring with them. It is worth noting that the stage model of gentrification theory notes that the banks and mortgage lending institutions take notice during the risk neutral or second

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6. Vern Mckinley, "Community reinvestment Act: Ensuring Credit Adequacy or Enforcing Credit Allocation?" *Journal of Regulation* 4, (1994): 26, accessed July 2009, <http://www.cato.org/pubs/regulation/17n4/vmck4-94.pdf>.

wave of gentrification, the risk prone gentrifiers or initial gentrifiers do most of the home improvements themselves and using their own income.

An eventual question that arises pertains to why the indigenous residents are not able to secure credit in the form of home loans, home improvement loans, and small business loans. An obvious answer would be the lack the sufficient incomes and favorable credit histories; however, that may not always be the reason in every case.

Vern McKinley notes,

Consumer surveys show that recent homebuyers strongly believe there is a bias in mortgage lending (whites—60 percent, Hispanics—60 percent, and blacks—83 percent). Data collected under the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act (HMDA) continues to show that blacks are more than twice as likely to be rejected for mortgages as whites or Asians, 34 percent versus 15 percent.<sup>7</sup>

The HMDA focuses on the practice of 'redlining' whereby lending institutions avoid doing business in certain geographic areas. The CRA was enacted as a follow-up to the HMDA, in part in response to instances in which poor white applicant had a significantly better chance of getting a mortgage loan than a wealthy black applicant.<sup>8</sup>

Both the CRA and HDMA can be used to strengthen home ownership of the indigenous residents, and at the very least they might be part of the methodology to maintain the present rate of homeownership among the indigenous residents. The existence of these two legislative attempts to achieve fair lending practices in all communities, may focus attention on the financial disparity between the indigenous residents and the new-arrival gentrifiers.

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7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

### **An Analysis of the Displacement of Indigenous Residents**

The CRA and the HMDA are two federally enacted policies that may be used in efforts to protect the indigenous residents from displacement due to gentrification. However, in the instances of the demolition of local public housing communities in Atlanta as well as numerous other cities, the displacement of indigenous residents becomes an eventuality. In these cases of the razing of entire public housing communities, the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Act of 1970 can help mitigate some of the pain and discomfort associated with displacement. According to Rubenstein,

The Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Act of 1970 requires local authorities to assure that every family displaced from federally-assisted projects after January 2, 1971, has the opportunity to move into comparable replacement housing. Under P.L. 91-646, a replacement dwelling is considered comparable if it meets two conditions. First, it has to be decent safe, sanitary, adequate in size, and within the financial means of the household. Second, a comparable replacement dwelling has to be located in an area not less desirable than the dwelling from which displacement occurred, accessible to places of employment, shopping, and other amenities, and available on a nondiscriminatory basis. To assure that all displacees are rehoused in comparable dwelling, the act requires that local authorities provide levels of advisory services and financial benefits that are far greater than those provided in the past.<sup>9</sup>

The relevance of this act is critical in the analysis of gentrification, the formation and implementation of this policy acknowledges that there is considerable damage done to families and individuals by displacement from home and community. James Rubenstein acknowledges the damage of displacement and although he does not use the

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9. James M. Rubenstein, "Relocation of Families for Public Improvement Projects: Lessons from Baltimore," *Journal of the American Planning Association* 54, no.2 (Spring 1988): 185.

word “gentrification,” he hints at demographic changes in communities that experience mass displacement of indigenous residents:

Several critics concentrated on psychological burdens displacees faced. The families who suffered most were those not prepared to cope with the forced move because of inadequate social and economic resources. Families found relocation a highly disruptive experience and left grief, pain, anger and alienation at the loss of homes and neighborhoods. However, different studies found that most displacees adjusted completely after the forced moves. Other critics addressed relocation’s impact on communities and specific neighborhoods. Those impacts included changing racial and economic patterns. Analysts placed relocation in a ‘no win’ position: some programs were under fire for concentrating, low-income blacks in the inner city, while others were criticized for scattering them.<sup>10</sup>

Rubenstein’s brief reference to the resilience of the displaced indigenous residents found in “some” studies should not diminish the detrimental effects of displacement and the effects it has on families. Rubenstein does not explore in depth the disruption that displaced families and individuals experience, such as the removal from communities and the central city services working poor families depend on. Loretta Lees, Tom Slayter, and Elvin Wyly capture the importance of public services to the working poor and indigenous residents with the statement that “Research showed how lower-middle class women found the inner city more supportive than the patriarchal low-density suburbs.”<sup>11</sup>

The dispersal of low income public housing residents to privately owned section 8 housing units across the urban landscape presents a myriad of difficulties that do not immediately surface after the initial displacement of the indigenous residents. The loss of community and being separated from vital services is one such difficulty that is highlighted in the following statement:

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10. Ibid., 186.

11. Loretta Lees, Tom Slayter, and Elvin Wyly, *Gentrification* (New York: Routledge, Taylor Francis Group, 2008), 75.

Not every defense of a neighborhood succeeds and, we must admit, not every successful defense succeeds in all ways. . . . If the attacks against it are too powerful, the community can eventually lose its vitality and verve . . . It is also easier for government to destroy community than to nurture this intangible element of the human spirit. To some extent, while the developers and most particularly, the long arm of the law of the City of New York that aided and abetted them, failed to convert this portion of an old quarter into a paradise for yuppies, they succeeded, at least for the time being in killing much of the precious spirit of the neighborhood.<sup>12</sup>

With the threat of displacement looming and the feeling of an uncertain future, it is not difficult to understand the disdain and rancor indigenous residents have toward their new neighbors. The thought of an entire community disappearing and being replaced with foreign structures and people is unimaginable to someone who has spent their entire life in that community. According to Lees, Slayter, and Wyly,

At the neighborhood level itself poor and vulnerable residents often experience gentrification as a process of colonialism by the more privileged classes. Stories of personal housing dislocation and loss, distended social networks, 'improved' local services out of sync with local needs and displacement have always been the underbelly of a process.<sup>13</sup>

### **Atlanta and Rapid Gentrification**

The relevance of dislocation, although not described in the vast majority of literature documenting gentrification, is an eventual effect of gentrification. Lees, Slayter, and Wyly, along with Niel Smith, link in detail the two urban events of gentrification and dislocation. The involvement of urban governing regimes in the process of gentrification and what is being coined by the author of this work as 'rapid gentrification' is undeniable. The Atlanta Housing Authority (AHA) developed a

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12. Ibid., 216.

13. Ibid., 221.

strategic plan that called for the demolition of several of Atlanta's public housing communities. This in itself seems odd that a local government agency would voluntarily shrink itself, but there are far more variables at work than the board of directors making a decision to demolish public housing units.

The involvement of the Atlanta urban governing regime is a factor in the decision to raze public housing communities, the real estate market along with the board of directors of the AHA in saw a profitable investment opportunity that involved the land that the public housing communities occupied. However, the plan did not involve the continued residence of the public housing residents. René Glover, the director of the AHA, stated the mission of the AHA's demolition strategy in the AHA Strategic Plan that reveals the involvement of private real estate developers. The Strategic Plan states the following:

Recognizing the dynamic Atlanta real estate market, if an attractive opportunity is presented to AHA that opportunity furthers AHA's strategies, goals and objectives, AHA will move forward with that opportunity. As these opportunities are presented to AHA and the determination is made to pursue these opportunities, we will engage in real estate transactions necessary to support the repositioning of our entire portfolio, the development of housing or mixed-use projects and the development of other facilities which are consistent with AHA's real estate strategies and goals. AHA will, as necessary and feasible, and if conditions so warrant, dispose of, demolish or voluntarily convert one or more of the public housing properties in AHA's portfolio. AHA may also demolish or dispose of property for other valid business reasons that are not associated with its repositioning strategies including, but not limited to, the need to address life, safety and health issues of AHA's families. All of AHA's conventional public housing assisted properties are potential candidates for subsidy conversion, rent restructuring or full or partial demolition or disposition in FY 2008.<sup>14</sup>

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14. Renee Lewis Glover, "Atlanta Housing Authority Strategic Plan," *The Housing Authority of the City of Atlanta* (2005): 25, accessed July 2009, [www.atlantahousing.org](http://www.atlantahousing.org).

The AHA Strategic Plan may read much like a private real estate investment firms prospectus. The primary focus and intent, as stated in this quote was the conversion of present AHA public housing communities as “attractive opportunities,” the concern for the families affected by this demolition seem secondary at best. The AHA self describes the public housing communities as being centers for concentrated poverty, focusing on the living condition of the public housing residents. The AHA also states the intent to build healthy communities through its Quality of Life Initiative (QLI) with the following statement:

The Quality of Life Initiative allows families in AHA’s remaining public housing projects the opportunity to escape an environment of concentrated poverty. This is consistent with AHA’s vision of providing eligible families with access to affordable housing while de-concentrating poverty and building healthy communities. The Quality of Life Initiative will focus on 11 of AHA’s remaining public housing communities. AHA is providing comprehensive relocation support for affected families. AHA will work closely with Atlanta Public Schools and other community stakeholders to provide responsible relocation that will ensure choice, support and successful outcomes for each family. To that end, families will receive 27 months of intensive human services development pre- and post- relocation as well as housing search, relocation and financial assistance. Each family will receive intensive human development services that will (1) Support the families pre and post relocation, (2) Promote successful transition of families to new communities, (3) Increase self-sufficiency, (4) Assist in achieving personal goals, and (5) The relocation team will provide the families with the tools to make informed choices about their best housing opportunities. Options include (1) AHA high-rise communities (seniors and persons with disabilities), (2) Private mixed income rental communities with a limited percentage of project based rental assistance, (3) Housing choice tenant based vouchers (4) The relocation team will assist residents in finding their new home, by providing Weekly tours to metro Atlanta Properties, Housing fairs where metro Atlanta properties show their communities to relocating families, Housing information located in each property’s relocation office, Transportation assistance such as MARTA tokens and travel to properties. Relocating residents will receive the following financial assistance: Moving reimbursements, Applications and holding fees, if applicable, Rental security deposits, Telephone,

internet or cable re-connection fees, Contracted AHA movers to move furniture and other items, and Packing and unpacking services<sup>15</sup>

The AHA Strategic Plan Relocation Fact Sheet, as stated, details the relocation of public housing families and states the procedural plan detail that complies with the Uniform Relocation and Real Property Acquisition Act of 1970. The concern generated by the AHA Strategic Plan and its QLI goes beyond the displacement of public housing communities by the AHA, it is the dispersal of public housing residents to the private public housing market with the use of "section 8" housing vouchers. The replacement of public housing communities with mixed-income communities was a viable solution within the strategic plan; however, all of the families who were public housing residents would not be able to reside in these communities because of issues of space and logistics. The concept of mixed-income may be problematic because these communities do not guarantee upward mobility for the indigenous residents.

The dismantling of poverty tracts may be the only benefit of mixed-income communities. Housing the working poor residents adjacent to middle-class residents in a class conscious society does not guarantee contact. Communities are defined by race and class and have been in the U.S. for generations. This is evident with phrases such as, working-class community, black community, or an upscale community. It becomes difficult to imagine how simply locating the working poor near the wealthy, will make the working poor "less wealthy" or increase their income level. Lance Freeman argues similarly that gentrifiers do bring benefit to indigenous residents, "but in ways more limited than the, poverty deconcentration thesis would suggest." He is clear that income

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15. Ibid.



mixing is no guarantee of upward mobility. Lees, Slayter, and Wyly also explore this argument by stating: "In a study of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside Nick Blomley has commented on just how 'morally persuasive' the concept of social mix can be in the face of addressing long-term disinvestment and poverty."<sup>16</sup> The idea of living next to wealth without the educational and employment opportunities to elevate individuals and families is a failed experiment at best.

Mixed income communities may also be doomed to failure in serving the working poor indigenous residents, because of real estate market dynamics. When public housing units are demolished and replaced with private mixed income communities, the indigenous residents must compete with the middle class for rental units. Even with section 8 housing vouchers, there will be a limited number of units for the displaced indigenous residents; it is impossible to re-house all of the displaced residents on the redeveloped site where they once lived. Lees, Slayter, and Wyly state,

When one household vacates a unit voluntarily and that unit is then gentrified . . . so that another similar household is prevented from moving in, the number of units available to the second household in that housing market is reduced. The second household, therefore is excluded from living where it would otherwise have lived.<sup>17</sup>

The theory of potential ground rent also highlights the relevance of the difficult predicament the indigenous residents find themselves in and the eventuality of displacement. Ground rent theory may actually explain in part the aversion landlords have to low income renters. The maximization of profit seeks the most beneficial use of

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16. Lees, Slayter, and Wyly, *Gentrification*, 206.

17. *Ibid.*, 219.

a structure. In the face of gentrification, landlords are eagerly awaiting the arrival of gentrifiers. Lees, Slayter, and Wyly state that "In the decision to rehabilitate an inner-city structure, once consumer preference tends to stand out above the others—the preference for profit, or, more accurately, a sound financial investment . . ."<sup>18</sup>

The very nature of urban redevelopment omits the concerns of the indigenous residents. The act of recreating communities for profit and with the ultimate goal of attracting the middle and upper-middle class to the inner-city involves the pursuit profit, the continued housing of the indigenous residents is not compatible with the level of redevelopment inner-city communities. This logic in part may explain the cycle of disinvestment and the eventual push for the demolition of public housing communities to make way for upscale communities adjacent to the cities central business district. Lees, Slayter, and Wyly describe the dilemma of older structures as investments:

When the contrast between old and new tends to have a clear spatial imprint—older land uses and structures near the core, for instance, and attractive for those saddled with older commitments for example, are holding investments in buildings that may have represented the highest and best use a century ago; spending money to maintain these assets as low-cost rental units becomes ever more difficult to justify.<sup>19</sup>

Although Lees, Slayter, and Wyly use the previous statement to describe private landlords, the AHA can be said to have the same type of profit seeking mentality that is ever conscious of the maximization of profit by achieving the potential ground rent. The ideal of providing housing to the working poor is no match for the profits secured by the restructuring of the urban landscape to fit the needs and consumer preferences of the

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18. Ibid., 50.

19. Ibid., 53.

gentrifiers. Low income renters, especially former public housing residents make the goal of recovering the investment of redevelopment impossible. The action of urban renewal is dependent on attracting the middle class as renters and home owners to secure a profit.

The demolition of public housing communities also causes a unique challenge for researchers interested in gentrification. This event presents a unique relevance to the analysis of gentrification as a change in the urban demography and landscape over a set period of time. The loss of public housing communities brings a unique concept the gentrification studies, the researcher of this work coined the phrase 'rapid gentrification' to describe and document the demolition and immediate dispersal of the indigenous residents also labeled public housing residents. The stage model of gentrification theory has been a mainstay in gentrification analysis. However, the stage model theory becomes useless in the analysis of the reconversion of public housing in Atlanta.

The AHA plan for relocating residents from all public housing facilities in the fiscal year of 2008 stated,

During FY 2008, AHA will complete relocation of residents from the University Homes as part of revitalization of that Community. Relocation expenses for University Homes are funded under the Grady HOPE VI revitalization grant for Replacement Housing Factor Grants. In addition to the University AHA is implementing plans for the relocation in FY 2008 of tenants from Leila Valley, Jonesboro North and South, U-Rescue Villas, Englewood Manor, Palmer House, Bowen Homes, and Thomasville Heights as part of AHA's Quality Living Initiative (QLI).<sup>20</sup>

It should be mentioned that the Housing and Urban Developments (HUD) HOPE VI was a program that would disrupt the cycle of poverty within public poverty by

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20. Glover, "Atlanta Housing Authority Strategic Plan," 10.

promoting home ownership. Lees, Slayter, and Wyly state: “. . . in the United States, HUD’s HOPE VI (Home Ownership and Opportunity for People Everywhere) program has been used to socially mix public housing in order to break down the culture of poverty and the social isolation of the poor.”<sup>21</sup> The logic behind the intent of this program was, concentrated poverty that is communal, created generations of poor because children are exposed to the constant realities of poverty with no contact or exposure to people of different socioeconomic classes eventually becoming isolated in hopeless ghettos.

Even with the intent of HOPE VI, the dismantling of public housing communities actually causes an accelerated and instantaneous gentrification titled “rapid gentrification.” Rapid gentrification is unique to the demolition of public housing communities in that there are no stages or waves of gentrifiers. After the removal of the indigenous residents, the mixed income communities are almost immediately built attracting new-arrival residents who cannot be labeled as “risk prone,” “risk neutral,” or “risk adverse.” The AHA demolition of public housing communities is not an organic form of gentrification where the risk prone wave of gentrifiers, who may be young recent college grads, gay or lesbian, or the artist and musicians move into a depressed community. Rapid gentrification is stageless, it utilizes a master plan in which communities that are built on the former site of the public housing communities, and where a very few of the indigenous residents will be allowed to return to the newly designed and built mixed income community.

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21. Lees, Slayter, and Wyly, *Gentrification*, 203.

The relevance of rapid gentrification to this study is critical to the analysis of gentrification. Rapid gentrification, either described or defined, has not been found in any of the literature on gentrification and is only was hinted at in the media. It should be mentioned that the local media has yet to report on the effects of displacement or track the relocation of the indigenous residents, their only interest was the erection of the new mixed income communities as successful urban renewal projects. It is vital that the plight of the indigenous residents be documented and that the planned displacement of thousands of Atlanta families be chronicled and detailed.

This research takes on an especially critical role in that it describes the removal of the working poor who are often invisible and despised by urban governing regimes seeking to attract wealthier home owners and high income renters. Attracting the gentry and dispersing the working poor throughout the multi-county metropolitan area solves several problems for the urban governing regimes. First, it attracts a higher property tax paying class of residents giving an immediate increase in the city operating budgets. One should keep in mind that there are no stages or waves of gentrification in rapid gentrification, and the demographic changes are felt as soon as the new development are built and purchased. Second, the city services that were provided to the working poor are not needed as intently as the communities become wealthier over a short span of time, the role of the police and human services changes as the community population changes. Third, new businesses sprout up to cater to the gentrifiers, many of them being popular national chains who would have never positioned themselves in the inner-city without rapid gentrification.

The urban landscape is always in a state of change. The phrase evolution is resisted by the researcher of this work, evolution is not the preferred term when the displacement of the indigenous residents is evident. It is accepted that the inner-city cannot be static under a market driven system of real estate. However, there is no explanation of the displacement of indigenous residents, except the operation of the market driven economic system where housing is viewed as an investment made for profit, instead of a human right.

The displacement of the indigenous residents is not always an inevitable component of gentrification. Some communities manage to resist the displacement due to gentrification in spite of a constantly changing urban landscape. The resistance to gentrification may involve several factors that enable the indigenous residents to remain in their homes. New structures that are built on vacant land in gentrified communities enable the original residents to remain in their homes, by easing the competition for residential space.

The development of empty spaces and vacant lots provides jobs and investment capital as well alternative residential spaces that ease competition for housing in a market driven economy. Private developers pursuing a profit motive may provide a solution to the displacement of the indigenous residents. Matthew Jerzyk confirms this with his statement,

SBER (a private development firm) developments mitigate the worst aspect of gentrification —displacement—because of their renovations of mills and industrial buildings do not have the same impact on local housing markets as other gentrification processes. In traditional models of gentrification, low-income homeowners are displaced by wealthier home buyers, and low-income renters are displaced by new landlords and higher rent-paying tenants. These

models assume that there is a frozen supply of housing stock that creates a zero-sum where one community moves in while another moves out.<sup>22</sup>

Matthew Jerzyk's research does not pertain solely to Providence, Rhode Island, the communities that surround the Atlanta University Center (AUC) in Atlanta may also fit this description. The African American owned real estate development and property management firm H. J. Russell and Company founded in 1952 originally as a plastering company, has developed numerous sites in Atlanta and the surrounding metropolitan area. The headquarters of H. J. Russell are one block east of the AUC at 504 Fair Street S.W. The development of apartment buildings and condominiums along Northside Drive as well as the new site of Pascals restaurant and the Caslteberry Inn, all on the perimeter of the AUC, have helped to mitigate the displacement due to gentrification. Using Matthew Jerzyk's research as a template, H. J. Russell and Company although smaller, has played a similar role as the Development firm SBER.

The development of vacant land in and around the AUC was not the only factor that helped resist gentrification. Atlanta is unique because of the AUC and the ability of the surrounding communities to maintain popular community institutions such as its churches and restaurants. These establishments and their continued profitability and popularity provide substantive proof that there are plenty of indigenous residents who remain in these communities and continue to support these businesses and churches. The existence of churches, small businesses and historically black colleges and universities

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22. Matthew Jerzyk, "Gentrification's Third Way: An Analysis of Housing Policy & Gentrification in Providence," *Harvard Law & Policy Review* 3, no. 2 (Summer 2009): 426, accessed July 2009, <http://hlpronline/pdf>.

provides a buffer against the displacement of communities that surround the AUC and actually provide a refuge for indigenous residents.

Lance Freeman describes the evolution of liquor stores as an indicator of the presence of gentrifying forces. Freeman describes the differentiation between alcohol wholesalers that serve the indigenous residents and gentrifiers in the following statement:

In most places in New York, a patron can browse the store, pick up a bottle, and make a selection. A few stores specialize in the sale of wine. In Harlem and many other low-income communities, however, the inventory and cashier are shielded behind thick sheets of plexiglass. This is presumably to protect the goods and store personnel from customers and those up to no good.<sup>23</sup>

Freeman's observations have merit when compared to the AUC. The liquor stores and gas stations that surround the AUC resemble the descriptions of pre-gentrified Harlem with plexiglass shielded clerks. The four grocery stores that surround the AUC serve college and university students as well as indigenous residents. Freeman's observations also provide evidence that gentrification has been resisted in the communities that surround the southern and western sides of the AUC, these businesses and churches would not normally be patronized by the new arrival gentrifiers with their appeal to the traditional ethnic culture of the indigenous residents. The opening of a Walmart on 835 Martin Luther King Drive sees a steady clientele of students and long term residents from the West End, Washington Park, Ashview Heights, and Vine City.

The upscale new location of Paschal's restaurant on 180-B Northside Dr. attracts a steady flow of professors and staff from the AUC as well as local professionals and tourist and is located across the street from the headquarters of H.J. Russell and

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23. Lance Freeman, *There Goes the Hood: Views of Gentrification from the Ground Up* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006), 33.



Company. It is worth mentioning that the original location of Paschal's restaurant was directly across from the Walmart and was a meeting place for Dr. Martin Luther King, Hosea Williams, John Lewis, and Andrew Young during the 1960's civil rights era in Atlanta. All of the educational, religious, and business entities in and around the AUC have served as an anchor that has enabled the indigenous residents to remain even though the AUC is positioned within walking distance of the central business district.

The AUC has three public housing communities positioned within and adjacent to it. John Hope Homes were located directly north east of Spellman College and southeast of the main campus of Clark Atlanta University. University Homes were located east of Clark Atlanta University directly across the street from the main campus and separated from John Hope Homes by Larkin Street. The third public housing community was Harris Homes located directly west of Morehouse College, separated by Joseph E. Lowery Drive. Atlanta is unique not only because of the AUC but also because of the close proximity of three public housing communities to these historically black colleges and universities.

The razing of John Hope Homes, University Homes, and Harris Homes to make way for mixed income housing is a primary goal clearly expressed in the Atlanta Housing Authority Strategic Plan. Harris Homes would eventually be replaced by Ashley College Town, a master planned mixed-income community directly west of the AUC. Ashley College Town consists of apartments and town homes that are marketed to college and university students. The communities of West View and West End border Ashley College Town directly to the west on the other sides of Lawton Street and Interstate Twenty. Although Harris Homes has been completely replaced by Ashley College Town

the West End and West View communities are largely unchained. The occurrence of rapid gentrification has taken place in Ashley College Town, but has not occurred in the West End and West View Communities which continue to house the indigenous residents.

The John Hope Homes were also razed and replaced by the Villages of Castleberry Hill, a master-planned mixed income community which is divided by Northside Drive. The AUC now has mixed-income communities that have seen rapid gentrification, instead of the traditional stage model theory, on its eastern and western boarders. The Atlanta Housing Authority clearly stated in its strategic plan as a goal, "Under the Business Plan, the Atlanta Housing Authority (AHA) is: (1) continuing to transform distressed public housing communities into healthy mixed-income communities, (2) facilitating opportunities for low-income families to live in healthy mixed-income communities."<sup>24</sup> Atlanta and the AUC display unique qualities that separate them from any other city that has undergone gentrification. The close proximity of the AUC to three public housing communities two of which have undergone rapid gentrification provides a uniquely different study with regards to gentrification and the displacement of the indigenous residents.

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24. Glover, Atlanta Housing Authority Strategic Plan, 19.

## CHAPTER V

### DATA ANALYSIS

Gentrification has been defined, analyzed, and explained within the literature from the disciplines of sociology, urban studies, political science, and urban planning and has distinctive definitions and explanations that are the result of the use of traditional descriptive and exploratory research. The plight of indigenous residents has seldom been explained in the vast majority of research within the discipline of urban politics, and has often been described as an externality or necessary evil of urban redevelopment. This study uses explanatory research as a methodology has to be applied to this work because of the lack of research that focuses on the causes and outcomes from the displacement of indigenous residents.

Exploratory research becomes familiar with the basic facts, settings, and concerns of an issue. It also creates a general mental picture of conditions, and formulates and focuses questions for future research. It generates new ideas, conjectures, and/or hypotheses; and aids in determining the feasibility of future research. It also aids in developing techniques for measuring and locating future data for further research.<sup>1</sup>

Exploratory research is seldom published. These studies are often included in more advanced research or as components in literature reviews. Exploratory research gives detailed answers to the questions of why an event happens and what is the event or phenomena actually is. Exploratory research often uses qualitative data in its description

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1. W. Lawrence Neuman, *Social Research methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon, 2000), 22.

of new issues and may use a wider range of information and data in discovering new issues and factors related to the research topic.

Descriptive research provides a detailed, highly accurate picture. It also locates new data that contradicts past data. Descriptive research also creates a set of categories or classifies types, and may clarify a sequence of steps or stages. There is also documentation of a causal process or mechanism, it reports on the background or context of a situation.<sup>2</sup>

Furthermore, "Descriptive research presents a picture of a situation, social setting or relationship. Much of the social research found in scholarly journals or used for making policy decisions is descriptive."<sup>3</sup> Exploratory and descriptive research both have shared similarities, with descriptive research being conducted to provide an accurate, highly-defined, and detailed view of phenomena. Exploratory research on the other hand has often been the precursor to descriptive research in that it seeks to familiarize the reader with a topic that has little or no research done on it.

Explanatory research, unlike exploratory or descriptive research, "tests a theory's prediction or principle, and elaborate and enrich a theory's explanation. Explanatory research may also extend a theory to new issues or topics. It can support or refute an explanation or prediction. It may also link issues or topics with a general principal. Lastly, it can determine which of several explanations is best."<sup>4</sup> Neuman also states, "the desire to know 'why,' to explain, is the purpose of explanatory research. It builds on exploratory and descriptive research and goes on to identify the reason something occurs.

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2. Neuman, *Social Research methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, 22.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

Going beyond focusing on a topic or providing a picture of it, explanatory research looks for causes and reasons.”<sup>5</sup>

Explanatory research lends itself to this analysis of gentrification because it allows for the exploration into the conditions of the indigenous residents throughout the events and stages of gentrification. The plight of the indigenous residents under the stage models of gentrification and also under ‘rapid gentrification’ has not occurred under previous exploratory and descriptive research. The subject of the demolition of federally subsidized and the immediate dispersal of the public housing residents to section 8 housing throughout the metropolitan area has never been researched in previous literature.

Explanatory research is essential to the analysis of the indigenous residents because the issues of the indigenous residents need to be linked to the general discussions and research on gentrification. The theory of the stage models of gentrification remains relevant and can be observed in its various stages in cities throughout the United States. However, the observation of the displacement of an entire community, the razing of that community, the construction of a new community that then brings a new residents of entirely different racial and socioeconomic classes; needs documentation and explanation. The fast nature of change of this form of gentrification termed “rapid gentrification,” requires documentation because it is easily forgotten when one considers the rapid and constantly changing urban landscape and demography.

The research in this work has been conducted with the hope that it will be useful to policy makers and social activist alike, however honestly stated this research is part of

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5. Neuman, *Social Research methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, 22.

an academic requirement and therefore is classified as basic research and not applied.

Applied research can best be defined as,

Research that is part of a job and is judged by sponsors who are outside the discipline of political science or sociology. The research problems are “narrowly constrained” to the demands of employers or sponsors. The rigor and standards of scholarship depend on the uses of results. Research can be “quick and dirty” or match high scientific standards. The primary concern is with the ability to generalize findings to areas of interest to sponsors. The driving goal is to have practical payoffs or uses for results. Success comes when results are used by sponsors in decision making.<sup>6</sup>

This work, being part of a strict academic requirement, and not being conducted for a sponsor or an entity outside of the academy, cannot be labeled as applied research. This work is considered explanatory in its research goal, but it is also considered basic because the potential use of the research.

This work is considered “basic” not because of its scope or lack of detail in its explanation of gentrification and the displacement of indigenous residents, but because of its potential use. Basic research clearly defined is,

Research that is intrinsically satisfying and judgments are made by other members of the discipline. Research problems and subjects are selected with a great deal of freedom. Research is judged by absolute norms of scientific rigor, and the highest standards of scholarship are sought. The primary concern is with the internal logic and rigor or research design. The driving goal is to contribute to basic, theoretical knowledge. Success comes when results appear in a scholarly journal and have an impact on others in the academic community.<sup>7</sup>

It is the researchers hope and goal that this research advances fundamental knowledge pertaining to those residents that are displaced due to gentrification, and the invisible quality of the indigenous residents in the urban environment starts to diminish as their

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6. Neuman, *Social Research methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, 25.

7. Ibid.

plight becomes known. The theoretical nature of basic research provides the best possibility for encouraging the use of this research as a tool for changing local public policies with regard to housing and housing trends that have an adverse effect on the working poor.

The use of this research can almost immediately be recognized as “basic” and not “applied.” The act of advocating openly for the rights of the working poor in inner-city communities all but eliminates any potential for this research being used as “applied research.” There are local community grass roots organizations that are active in representing the interest of the working poor and fair and affordable housing practices; however, these groups have used basic research as well as research that had the goals of descriptive and explanatory research. It is well worth stating the fact that basic research is available in journal articles for free or on scholarly journal websites at a minimal cost.

Applied research is expensive to fund and belongs exclusively to those who fund the research and there may be restrictions on its use. If the true purpose and intent of research on the working poor and housing and economic inequalities is to be realized it must be free and available to the public “at large.” Applied research concerning housing issues within gentrification and the working poor may actually be thought of as inappropriate if not unethical. Those organizations that can afford applied research are the urban governing regimes that often fund research in the form of studies that promote urban renewal and seek to change the urban landscape from an urban planning and architectural perspectives and goals. The rights and concerns of the indigenous residents are purposely omitted from much of the applied research on gentrification. The importance and reasoning explanatory basic research is best summed up by W. Lawrence

Neuman in the following quote: “Basic research is the source of most new scientific ideas and ways of thinking about the world. It can be exploratory, descriptive, or explanatory; however, explanatory research is the most common.”<sup>8</sup>

The majority of existing literature concerning gentrification, as mentioned before, approaches gentrification as a positive phenomenon that has negative minor externalities. These externalities are the displacement of the indigenous residents and have been described as a necessary evil throughout the literature. The very act of resisting gentrification becomes an act of negative rebellion and is depicted as obstructing the redevelopment and rebirth of the inner city.

Lance Freeman describes the negative receptions that gentrifiers have toward the continued presence of those indigenous residents that resist gentrification by remaining in a changing community. Freeman describes the ability of the indigenous residents of the Harlem community to remain after the risk prone stage of gentrification in the following statement:

Young men with pants hanging down and doo-rags are a much more common sight that yuppie gentrifiers. Although national chain stores have encroached on 125<sup>th</sup> Street, stores selling hip-hop gear targeted to young black and Latino youth are still ubiquitous. Despite all the talk of gentrification, one would not confuse Harlem with Park Slope or the Upper West Side, two other New York neighborhoods with a history of gentrification. As a visitor from Australia remarked to me, ‘Harlem seems to be resisting gentrification pretty well.’<sup>9</sup>

The previous observation by Lance Freeman is laced with normative statements that depict the indigenous residents as undesirable elements that spoil communities on the

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8. Neuman, *Social Research methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, 23.

9. Lance Freeman, *There Goes the Hood: Views of Gentrification from the Ground Up* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006), 29.



verge of redevelopment. This theme of viewing the working poor and non-white indigenous residents in stereotypical threatening fashion that is often reinforced nightly on local television news stations in many metropolitan areas, is heavily prevalent throughout gentrification literature. This bias against the working poor inner-city indigenous residents had to be addressed and challenged before the interest of these residents who are displaced throughout the stages of gentrification, and in rapid gentrification are emphasized.

The author, professor, and noted black feminist Bell Hooks addresses the bias against the working poor from a policy and cultural perspective that challenges the middle-class assumptions that isolate and belittle the poor and indigenous residents alike. Hooks attacks the neo-conservative agenda that criminalizes the working poor and seeks to eliminate policies that address unemployment and promote the construction of affordable housing. Hooks does not address the negative aspects of gentrification specifically, but here sensitive and conscience research highlights the difficulties of being poor in the United States.

Loretta Lees, Tom Slayter, and Elvin Wyly are one of the few gentrification researchers that openly advocate for the human rights of the indigenous residents and have managed to articulate those interests while providing a theoretical analysis of gentrification with all of its externalities and benefits exposed. Lees, Slayter, and Wyly use the concepts of the "emancipatory city" and Neil Smith's "revanchist city" to expose the anti-poor sentiments that saturate the reasoning and thinking of gentrifiers especially in the risk-neutral and risk-adverse stages of gentrification.

The use of research that challenges conventional theories pertaining to gentrification as well as developing explanatory basic research that documents the systematic displacement of the indigenous residents, changes the approach of this research into gentrification. W. Lawrence Neuman describes three approaches to research; positivism, interpretive social science, and critical social science. "Positivism has the goal of discovering natural laws so people can predict and control events. It has stable existing patterns of order that can be discovered, and states that science is value free, and values have no place except when choosing a topic."<sup>10</sup> "Interpretive Social Science has the goal of understanding and describing meaningful social action. It has fluid definitions of a situation created by human interaction and values are an integral part of social life: no group values are wrong, only different."<sup>11</sup> The third approach Neuman provides is "critical social science."

Critical social science has the goal of smashing myths and empowering people to change society radically. It views the nature of social reality as being conflict filled and governed by hidden underlying structures. Critical Social Science views human beings as creative, adaptive people with unrealized potential trapped by illusion and exploitation. The theory promoted by critical social science promotes a critique that reveals true the true conditions of people and helps people see the way to a better world.<sup>12</sup>

This analysis of gentrification makes the claim that the process of gentrification starts before the arrival of the risk prone or first wave and actually begins with the living conditions of the original residents and the physical condition of the structures in which they reside. The critical social science approach to research is essential to the

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10. Neuman, *Social Research methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, 85.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.

explanatory study of the people who are displaced due to the constantly transforming urban landscape and is of value in explaining the devaluation and removal of entire communities of residents. This approach is key to the examination of the policies and the role of urban governing regimes in the analysis of gentrification and how these participants and events lend themselves to the displacement of the indigenous residents.

The critical social science approach may encounter criticism from traditionalist who may raise issues of objectivity that may arise when the reason for the research is “to smash myths and empower people to change society radically,”<sup>13</sup> and the nature of social reality is “conflict filled and governed by hidden underlying structures.”<sup>14</sup> It should be obvious that the stereotypical images that originate from racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic class perceptions and the economic and political role that urban governing regimes play in the phenomenon of gentrification. The loss of objectivity is not a factor when one is able to maintain that gentrification from its inception has the potential for the disruption, displacement, and the demolition of communities.

### **Stage Models of Gentrification and Atlanta**

The stage models of gentrification theory provides a chronological view of gentrification with the risk-prone, risk-neutral, risk-adverse and the wealthy elite or super-gentrifiers that arrive after a community becomes an upscale driving up real-estate prices to record level highs. The stage model theory is a mainstay in the analysis of gentrification and is featured often in the disciplines of urban politics, urban planning,

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13. Neuman, *Social Research methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, 85.

14. Ibid.

and sociology. Public housing communities have been systematically demolished across the United States being replaced by mixed income communities, with Atlanta being only one of the numerous cities that have experienced this phenomenon.

Atlanta, however, is unique in that it has three former public housing communities, John Hope Homes, University Homes, and Harris Homes, on the eastern and western sides of the AUC both located across the street from the AUC. John Hope Homes, located one block east of the AUC was a public housing community razed and replaced by the Villages of Castleberry Hill, a mixed- income community (see Appendix A for photographs). This public housing community was named for the former president of Morehouse College and Atlanta University and fellow founder of the Niagara Movement, which would later become the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored Peoples). "John Hope was a close friend and peer of W.E.B DuBois who was also a professor at Atlanta University. They were both present along with twenty-seven people and one teenager at the meeting in Ontario, Canada on July 10, 1905 that would form the Niagara Movement."<sup>15</sup> University Homes, located directly east of Clark Atlanta University's main campus, was demolished in 2008 and presently remains a series of vacant lots (see Appendix B for photographs). Harris Homes, located on the western side of the AUC, was a public housing community that was demolished to make way for the Ashley College Town mixed-income community (see Appendix C for photographs).

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15. David Levering Lewis, *W.E.B. DuBois: Biography of a Race 1868-1919* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1993), 316.

The Villages of Castleberry Hill and Ashley College Town provides an opportunity to observe an accelerated, state sponsored, form of gentrification that renders the stage model theory useless. The concept of rapid gentrification must be employed to describe the relocation of entire public housing communities, the razing of the entire community, and the construction of a mixed-income community. The relocation of the public housing residents had to abide by the Uniform Relocation Assistance Act of 1971 in regards to the relocation of public housing residents, which provided financial assistance in finding suitable replacement housing. The AHA was required to follow this requirement; however, public housing was being demolished under the auspices of the department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), leaving private section 8 housing as the only alternative. The resulting action is the dispersing of former public housing residents throughout the Atlanta metropolitan landscape having lost the sense of familiarity and community.

### **Rapid Gentrification and Atlanta**

The concept of rapid gentrification is directly applicable to the razing of University Homes, John Hope Homes, and Harris Homes. The traditional stage model of gentrification theory does not pertain to the AHA's strategic plan because the demolition of public housing communities in Atlanta took place after the forced relocation of the public housing residents. Public housing communities in Atlanta were replaced by entirely new structures built by private developers in partnership with the AHA. The AHA combined with private developers had the specific goal of exiting the

administration of federal housing communities in favor of privately managed mixed-income communities that were master planned and built to attract middle-class renters.

The displacement of the public housing residents did not occur during stages or due to waves of gentrifiers, it happened under the administration of the AHA and was financed by the federal government according to the guidelines of the Uniform Relocation Assistance Act of 1971. The absence of stages or waves of gentrifiers would remove the conflict that may occur when long term residents experience the transformation of their communities due to the arrival of the wealthier newcomers. However, the trauma of the mass relocation of an entire apartment community in a substantially shorter period of time cannot be denied. The Uniform Relocation Assistance Act actually recognizes that trauma and has the stipulation that relocation services and assistance must be rendered to public housing residents to ease the trauma of a forced move.

James Rubenstein highlights this need with this statement which defines the need for assistance by public housing residents:

Several critics concentrated on psychological burdens displacees faced. The Families who suffered the most were those least prepared to cope with the forced move because of inadequate social and economic resources. Families found relocation a highly disruptive and disturbing experience and felt grief, pain, anger, and alienation at the loss of their homes and neighborhoods.<sup>16</sup>

The relocation of three housing communities in the AUC, with less than a mile between them, had a substantial effect on the demographics of the AUC and its surrounding communities. The forced and hurried relocation of thousands of families

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16. James Rubenstein, "Relocation of Families for Public Improvement Projects: Lessons from Baltimore," *Journal of the American Planning Association Journal* 54, no. 2 (Spring 1988): 186.

from these three public housing communities occurred in a relatively short time span when compared to gentrification that occurred in stages or waves. The Gentrification patterns that occurred in and adjacent to the AUC was rapid gentrification displacing all of the indigenous residents of the public housing communities at once followed the demolition of all of the public housing units.

Another unique quality of the West End and West View communities is the existence of a multitude of religious institutions. These two communities are home to Suni Muslims, Rastafarians, Hebrew Isrealites, the Shrine of the Black Madonna (Black Pan-African Christians), Catholics, Black Baptist, and The Nation of Islam; which gives these two communities a religiously diverse population. The existence of this multitude of religions and religious sects among African Americans serves as a visible marker that gentrification has yet to displace substantial numbers of the indigenous residents.

H. Gibbs Knotts and Moshe Haspel document the effect of gentrification on religious institutions in *The Impact of Gentrification on Voter Turnout*. Knotts and Haspel describe the correlation between religion and gentrification with this statement, "Gentrification may also weaken existing neighborhood institutions, such as politically active churches and civic associations, which normally foster political participation."<sup>17</sup> The existence of the numerous religious institutions within an eight square block diameter that borders the AUC is an indicator that gentrification has not had a substantial effect on the West End and West View communities. It should be mentioned

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17. H. Gibbs Knotts and Moshe Haspel, "The Impact of Gentrification on Voter Turnout," *Social Science Quarterly* 87, no. 1, (March 2006): 112.

that there are several white homeowners in the West End, but they remain almost hidden when compared to the vast community of African Americans.

The creation of mixed-income, master-planned communities are often presented as a solution to the problem of the concentration of poverty in public housing communities. However, mixed-income communities do not guarantee upward mobility for the indigent former public housing residents. Loretta Lees, Tom Slayter, and Elvin Wyly explore the problem with mixed-income rental communities that attempt to promote a social mix of residents from different economic classes. Lees, Slayter, and Wyly explain this concept with the following statement:

The problem with 'social mix' however is that it promises equality in the face of hierarchy. First, as often noted, it is socially one-sided. If social mix is good, argue local activist then why not make it possible for the poor to live in rich neighborhoods? . . . Second, the empirical evidence suggests that it often fails the social and economic conditions for renters. Interaction between owner-occupiers and renters in "mixed" neighborhoods seems to be limited. More importantly it can lead to social segregation and isolation.<sup>18</sup>

The location of the Castleberry Hill and Ashley College Town were not created out of a sense of altruism for the poor as stated by the AHA, who sought to take full advantage of the market conditions in the conversion of federally owned housing communities to privately owned, mixed-income, master-planned communities. The location of these two mixed-income communities, across the street from six historically black colleges and universities was done with the intent of profiting from the housing needs of over fourteen thousand students. It is well worth mentioning that not every student desires to live in on campus housing. Lees, Slayter, and Wyly describe the profit

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18. Lees, Slayter, and Wyly, *Gentrification*, 206.



seeking market driven approach that favors the wealthy over the indigent in this statement:

In the decision to rehabilitate an inner-city structure, one consumer preference tends to stand out above the others—the preference for profit, or, more accurately, a sound financial investment . . . A theory of gentrification must explain why some neighborhoods are profitable to redevelop while others are not.<sup>19</sup>

The AUC and its surrounding mixed-income communities fit the model for profitability according to the AHA strategic plan. The plan states,

AHA and our various private sector development partners are engaged in ‘community building’ projects with the goal of creating healthy and economically sustainable mixed use, mixed-income communities. The two critical components of the revitalization program are the real estate component and the human resource component. The goal of the real estate component is to create, in partnership with excellent private sector developers, healthy and economically sustainable mixed use, mixed-income communities.<sup>20</sup>

The unique qualities of the AUC and the close proximity of the public housing communities to these historically black colleges and universities, contributed to the demand for the conversion these communities to private mixed-income communities. Rapid gentrification would be the only method of removing the indigenous residents from public the housing communities, raze the older structures, and build new mixed-income communities that would guarantee a profitable return for the AHA and its private real estate developer partners.

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19. Ibid., 50.

20. Renee Glover, “Atlanta Housing Authority Strategic Plan,” *The Housing Authority of the City of Atlanta, GA* (2005): 22, accessed July 2009, [www.atlantahousing.org](http://www.atlantahousing.org).

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

The terms “gentrification” and “displacement” are not mutually inclusive or exclusive to one another. A community organizer, who observes the arrival of young childless couples, members of the gay and lesbian communities, and hip young artists and musicians to a disinvested community may view this as the inception of an infusion of investment capital that will ultimately displace the indigenous residents. This socialist viewpoint of gentrification may not be shared by the majority, nor will it replace the positive connotation of gentrification as an urban revitalizing force. The other extreme is the view of the investors, developers, and banking interests that view gentrification as an opportunity to maximize profits and also involve improving the urban landscape. This capitalist profit-oriented view of gentrification does not consider the displacement of the indigenous residents a vital concern. In fact, the removal of this undesirable element is seen as removing a barrier to the profits that could be derived from reinvestment and redevelopment of these older blighted communities.

The two extreme viewpoints of gentrification, although valid and reflected in various degrees in the general society, may ignore the actual experience of gentrification from the perspective of the indigenous residents. As previously mentioned, the stage model of gentrification theory presents a gradual house-by-house, block-by-block, transformation of a community that eventually displaces the indigenous residents. In

contrast to the stage model of gentrification theory, the rapid gentrification theory of gentrification describes the immediate displacement of the indigenous residents followed by the razing of public housing and the immediate construction of mixed-income housing. The actual experiences of the displaced indigenous residents are often ignored or dismissed by community activists, real estate developers, and urban governing officials alike.

### **The Plight of the Displaced Indigenous Residents**

When exploring the plight and experiences of the displaced indigenous residents the issues of poverty and socioeconomic class become inescapable. The combination of forced relocation with the handicapping effects of the lack of financial resources becomes traumatic and often escapes the attention of the middle-class researchers that focus on gentrification. The planned change of residence for an individual or family can be stressful but necessary because of housing or employment needs. However, involuntary relocation seldom occurs at a point in time when a family is fully able to make a seamless transition to a new community. The displacement of the indigenous residents may also have societal cost as well. It is not difficult to see the problematic effects of relocating an entire public housing community from federally subsidized public housing to private section 8 housing that may be scattered across the city and suburban areas.

The general urban community may not be conscience of the people who are displaced either as individuals or as an aggregate group. The renewal of blighted communities and the demolition of public housing communities which may both be promoted because urban governing regimes and the local media views urban renewal as a

windfall for the city. One may find it difficult to argue with the reshaping of communities that have large concentrations of indigent families. However, the living conditions and the emotional and financial well-being of the indigenous residents after the displacement due to gentrification are seldom discussed. In fact, due to the ageing urban infrastructure and the push for urban renewal by urban governing regimes the numbers of displaced indigenous residents may be understated and underreported. “Quantitatively, the problem of forced displacement is substantial and growing. A recent study by the Legal Services Anti-Displacement Projects concludes that 2.5 million persons a year in the United States is a conservative estimate of the magnitude of displacement at the present time (1981).”<sup>1</sup>

Although it may be argued that private development displaces more people than public or government sponsored improvement projects, the demolition of federally subsidized housing communities may be classified as a public improvement project that causes the immediate displacement of an entire community. Government still has a substantial role in the displacement process today. Some direct government-initiated displacement still occurs for a wide variety of public-works projects—high-ways and roads, dams, public, buildings, airports. And a great deal of ostensibly private-sector displacement is supported by or the indirect result of government policies, programs, or action. Examples are private-market ripple effects caused by government investment in downtown redevelopment, public transit, or housing rehabilitation; tax policies that foster home ownership and thus encourage conversion of rental units into condominiums, or

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1. Chester Hartman, “The Right to Stay Put,” *The Gentrification Reader*, ed. Loretta Lees, Tom Slayter, and Elvin Wyly (New York: Routledge, Taylor Francis Group, 2010), 531.

that encourage luxury renovations of historic properties; policies that permit and encourage a shift from fixed-to variable rate mortgages; and state and local landlord-tenant laws that permit easy evictions.<sup>2</sup>

The examination of the literature pertaining to gentrification, the examination of federal and local housing policies and the role of urban governing regimes; gives a detailed view of the numerous components of the process and outcomes of gentrification and the displacement that occurs as a result. One conceptual notion that arises from this analysis is the notion that “people must be more important than things,” or stated another way, “people over profit.” This idea may seem overly simplistic at first glance, however, it has been a silent underlying theme and ideology throughout this work. When analyzing federal and urban housing policies this theme becomes relevant especially in researching the “policy outcome” stages of policy analysis.

### **Efforts to Mitigate the Displacement of the Indigenous Residents**

The notion that “people are more important than things” may also sound overly philosophical and hokey; however, it may actually focus and prioritize the efforts to lessen or mitigate the negative effects of gentrification. Notably, “The Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) was actually proposed during the Carter presidential administration to thwart the practice of redlining which occurred in minority and working-class and working-poor communities.”<sup>3</sup> The pre-gentrified communities are often described as being in a state of disinvestment, which gives a sharp contrast to the

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2. Ibid.

3. Vern Mckinley, “Community Reinvestment Act: Ensuring Credit Adequacy or Enforcing Credit Allocation?” *Journal of Regulation* 4, (1994): 26, accessed July 2009, <http://www.cato.org/pubs/regulation/regv17n4/vmck4-94.pdf>.

housing conditions of the indigenous residents who lack the funding or capital to maintain and refurbish their homes; and the first wave of gentrifiers or the risk prone who are able to secure home improvement loans in order to refurbish older structures. There are sections of the West End and large segments of the West View communities that can be described by this pattern of disinvestment.

The CRA may actually be the best possible means to ease the cycle of disinvestment that is a precursor to gentrification and is responsible for the sharp visual contrast between the indigenous residents and the risk prone. The local and community banks and lending thrifts are the primary forces in providing capital for home improvement and home financing. A stronger lending requirement for banks and lending thrifts could also improve the living conditions for renters. Often times, landlords will delay improvements and maintenance to rental structures in an attempt to hold the property until a greater profit can be gained from the higher rents charged after gentrification takes place. A stronger CRA requirement may eliminate an excuse used by landlords to delay renovating rental properties and improve the living conditions for the indigenous residents. If more indigenous home owners are able to maintain and improve their homes, an adjacent apartment building in a state of disrepair would bring negative attention and pressure for the landlord to re-invest some of the rental fees into the maintenance of the structure.

It should be mentioned that the condition of the pre-gentrified indigenous communities may be described as in a state of dysfunction and riddled with poverty. William Julius Wilson gives an accurate definition of a poverty tract that also describes the conditions of communities east and southeast of the AUC. Wilson defines both,

census tracts and poverty tracts as, "a census tract as a relatively homogeneous area with respect to population characteristics, economic status, and living conditions with an average population of 4,000. Poverty tracts are those in which at least 20 percent of the residents are poor, and ghetto poverty tracts are those in which at least 40 percent are poor."<sup>4</sup> This statement is critical in describing the West End and West View communities.

Often times, gentrification has been described as a cure to the problem of inner-city poverty. However, the event known as gentrification consisting of the traditional stage model of gentrification theory or rapid gentrification, never solves inner-city poverty, it simply moves poverty elsewhere. An understanding of inner-city poverty and disinvestment as a comparative relationship between those who are in a state of need and those who are considerably wealthier, may also be critical to understanding poverty of pre-gentrified communities. Manning Marable details a comparative view of black poverty with the following statement:

Poverty must be understood properly as a comparative relationship between those segments of classes who are deprived of basic human needs (e.g., food, shelter, clothing, medical care) vs. the most secure and affluent classes within a social economic order. It does relatively little good to compare and contrast the family of a Puerto Rican welfare mother in the South Bronx with a poor family in Lagos, Sao Paulo or Bombay. Black American living conditions may be superior in a relative material sense to those of working class families in Poland- but we are not poles. The process of impoverishment is profoundly national and regional, and it is in the light of capitalist America's remarkable success in producing an unprecedented standard of living for the majority of its indigenous white population that Blacks' and Hispanics material realities must be judged.<sup>5</sup>

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4. William Julius Wilson, *When Work Disappears: The World of the New Urban Poor* (New York: Vintage, 1997), 6.

5. Manning Marable, *How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America: Problems in Race, Political Economy, and Society* (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 1999), 54.

The description of black poverty as a comparative phenomenon is a critical component in the understanding of displacement due to gentrification. The notion of the new arrivals as being of a different class and culture competing for limited space is reinforced by Marable's comparative analysis of inner-city black poverty. His statement also validates the tensions between these two groups who inhabit the community for limited spans of time under the stage model theory of gentrification; however, it also may explain rapid gentrification as a lacking class conflict because the indigenous residents are relocated long before the new arrival gentrifiers arrive.

Another factor that may exacerbate the tensions and conflicts between the indigenous residents and the gentrifiers is the availability of affordable housing. The perception of limited space in the inner-city benefits real estate developers and policy makers alike. The increased cost of housing and the higher property taxes rates is a direct result from the competition for space in the inner-city. This competition may not have to be as fierce nor does it have to artificially inflate home prices and lead to the displacement of long term residents, if there were more housing structures available.

Inner-city communities and those communities that surround the central business districts may have vacant warehouses and former industrial buildings that are empty. These buildings can be redesigned and refurbished to contain loft style condominiums or apartments. The perception of limited housing options in these pre-gentrified communities is eased with the introduction of new housing stock, the homes owned by the indigenous residents are no longer seen as primary targets by developers and gentrifiers.



The construction of new housing from older unused structures presents another option that may provide affordable housing. Gentrification is a market driven force that restructures the urban landscape using the infusion of private capital, as a driving force that increases the cost of housing as a direct result of the investment in older structures and the creation of new housing.

With this definition in mind, it becomes necessary for the community and urban governing regimes to understand and promote initiatives that foster affordable housing. As presented in the article, "Case Studies of Local Efforts to Mitigate Displacement," Community and city support for low-income housing can help motivate entities to build affordable housing. Inclusionary zoning regulations, for example, can encourage or require for-profit developers to include affordable units in their own projects. As we saw in Los Angeles's Figueroa Corridor, people anticipate a turn to the mixed-use and mixed-income models of development in the near future due to the increased cost of housing and land. In Central Area of Seattle and in Chicago's uptown, such development is already taking place.<sup>6</sup>

The creation of new housing stock, and zoning requirements that allow for the construction of affordable housing stock is an effort that indirectly benefit the indigenous residents. Efforts to preserve the homes of the indigenous residents have to be undertaken to prevent the otherwise inevitable displacement of the original residents of the pre-gentrified communities. The early focus of home retention in the primary stages of gentrification can save moderately priced housing and mitigate the displacement to

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6. Diane K. Levy, Jennifer Comey, and Sandra Padillia, "Case Studies of Local Efforts to Mitigate Displacement," *Urban Institute* (2006): 2, accessed July 2009, <http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/411294gentrification.pdf>.

gentrification. Briefly stated, "In neighborhoods beginning to experience increased housing costs, retention efforts can strengthen the affordable housing stock through assisting residents with home improvements so that they can remain in their homes."<sup>7</sup>

The creation of new affordable housing may be resisted by private developers seeking to maximize profits, as well as city zoning boards and councils that seek to limit affordable housing developments in favor of more profitable upscale developments. The very function of city zoning boards abridges the rights of land owners in favor of public concern and safety. Local zoning boards are have no set national standard as to what is preferred and vary with respect to city, county, state, and region of the country.

Therefore limits may be placed on the type of housing that may be erected in specific communities, which is done under the premise of neighborhood preservation. This type of zoning has a restrictive quality that seeks to maintain certain a developmental standard that insist on larger homes on larger lot sizes. This type of zoning practice known as exclusionary zoning increases the cost of housing by creating exclusive enclaves.

Exclusionary zoning may preserve historic districts that surround central business districts, or may restrict the development of moderately priced housing throughout urban communities. Many local zoning boards have practiced exclusionary zoning with ambiguous motives and results that greatly limit affordable housing in gentrified communities. Local zoning boards which often promote the interest of urban governing regimes, have been challenged and had their rulings overturned by state courts and the U.S. Supreme Court. John M. Levy describes these landmark rulings with the statement, "In 1965 the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania overturned an ordinance that established a

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7. Ibid.

four-acre minimum lot size requirement, stating, it is not difficult to envision the tremendous hardship, as well as chaotic conditions, which could result if all the townships in this area decided to deny to a growing population sites for residential development within the means of at least a significant segment of the population.”<sup>8</sup>

The most influential cases that challenged exclusionary zoning is Southern Burlington County National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) v. Township of Mount Laurel. Levy describes this case in detail:

In 1975 in the best known of the exclusionary cases, Southern Burlington County NAACP v. Township of Mount Laurel (generally referred to simply as Mt. Laurel), the Supreme Court of New Jersey found that the entirety of the township zoning ordinance acted to exclude whole classes of individuals (including the poor and minorities) and was invalid under the New Jersey state constitution. The township was instructed to prepare a new ordinance that remedied these defects. In 1983, a group of cases, collectively referred to as Mount Laurel II, pushed the judicial interpretation of a community's area wide obligations even further. Among the points made in the decision were that all municipalities have an obligation to provide housing opportunities for their low- and moderate-income residents that any municipality that permits economic growth must create opportunities for provision for some portion of the region's low- and moderate-income housing needs, and that municipalities must take steps to that said housing opportunities are realistic.<sup>9</sup>

The Supreme Court of New Jersey's ruling provided a legal basis of urban planning that listed several options that local governments and zoning boards could enact to adhere to the court's ruling. Levy confirms this with the following statement:

One of the steps that municipalities could take to bring themselves into conformance was the removal of all legal barriers to the building of low- and moderate-income housing. This could be interpreted to mean that any land- use control regulation that increases cost but cannot be shown to be essential to maintenance of health, safety, and welfare would not be sustainable. Tax

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8. John M. Levy, *Contemporary Urban Planning* 7<sup>th</sup> ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall Publishers, 2006), 129.

9. Ibid.

abatement for low- and moderate-income housing, inclusionary zoning devices, and set-asides might also be required to bring a community into conformance with Mt. Laurel II.<sup>10</sup>

The State Supreme Court's decisions were a de facto form of advocacy planning that reflects the interest of the marginalized urban groups. Advocacy planning arises from the tradition of urban planning that encourages planners to represent the interest of minorities and poorer residents in need of affordable, safe, and stable housing. Advocacy planning has its origins in the political and social activism of African Americans from the 1950s and 1960s which also increased mainstream societies' sensitivities for marginalized ethnic, gender, and socioeconomic group. John Levy describes advocacy planning and the reasoning behind it:

In general, advocacy planners who represent less prosperous subgroups of the population will have at least some element of a radical political perspective. It is the view that society exploits, mistreats, or otherwise abuses some of its citizens that is likely to propel one into an advocacy role. If, on the other hand, one sees society as generally fair and just, one is not likely to see much need for advocacy planning.

The notion of advocacy may also be used in a slightly different sense. Rather than serve as the advocate of a particular group in society, the planner may advocate a particular cause or program, such as parks, mass transit, highways, or environmental preservation (and affordable housing). The planner who represents a cause may have a somewhat easier time of making a claim to serving the public interest as a whole than does the planner who represents a particular group. But even here, if one picks any goal, it will generally turn out that accomplishing it creates some gainers and some losers.<sup>11</sup>

The State Supreme Court decisions combined with the practice of advocacy planning may have the effect of diminishing the displacement that may accompany urban redevelopment. However, these two factors involve urban planners and zoning boards

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10. Ibid.

11. Ibid., 88.

specifically. Advocacy planning can promote the construction of affordable housing in communities that surround the central business districts where redevelopment becomes the immediate goal urban governing regimes reflected through the actions local zoning boards. The State Supreme Court decisions establish requirements for both urban planners and local zoning boards, and the advocacy planners become local bureaucrats who promote the housing needs for the working poor. Both of these factors resist the displacement of the indigenous residents, and take place within urban governments in the legislative and executive realms.

Other local efforts to stem displacement must include efforts that allow the indigenous residents to remain homeowners in the face of an active and escalating housing market. Homeowner housing retention efforts along with stronger CRA requirements imposed on local banking and lending thrifts can help the indigenous residents to remain as home owners in their communities. These efforts must focus primarily on the indigenous resident homeowners and the retention of their greatest assets that may contain decades of equity and possibly generations of family members as residents. Research indicates the following:

Asset building strategies, also used in each of the six sites, play a contemporary role to production and retention approaches. The goal is to increase individuals' assets so that they have increased ability to address housing and other needs, making them less at the mercy of housing market changes. Individual development accounts (IDAs) and programs to increase homeownership are examples of such efforts. Alone, asset building efforts are unlikely to have a broad impact on a community, though certainly they are important for individual participants. In combination they can strengthen overall displacement mitigation efforts.<sup>12</sup>

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12. Levy, Comey, and Padilla, Case Studies of Local Efforts to Mitigate Displacement, 3.

The previous assessment frames the essential strategy for diminishing the effects of the displacement of the indigenous residents. The efforts to mitigate displacement due to gentrification have two essential elements; community involvement and the involvement of the urban governing regimes. Community involvement is essential in diminishing displacement. All too often, the indigenous residents are silent bystanders as all the stages or waves of gentrification happen around them with their displacement from their community and homes as the last event. The importance of the housing rights of these long term established residents is paramount. The indigenous residents in spite of their lack of excessive wealth when compared to the new arrival gentrifiers may contribute to the long term health and welfare of the community. Research has found that,

Residential stability engenders a host of personal and social benefits. Long-term residents brings safety of person and property ('eyes on the street,' people looking out for each other and each other's homes), helpful and satisfying social ties to neighbors and local commercial establishments, greater care for public and private space, and lower housing cost.<sup>13</sup>

The second element in the efforts to mitigate displacement due to gentrification is the involvement of the urban governing regimes. This element has two components. The first is the role of the elected officials. The elected officials in the urban governing regimes must value and respect the housing rights of the indigenous residents and their contribution to these established communities. If the elected and appointed local officials abide by the theme "people are more important than things," the passage of homeowner friendly zoning ordinances and fair property taxation legislation becomes possible and

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13. Chester Hartman, "The Right to Stay Put," *The Gentrification Reader*, ed. Loretta Lees, Tom Slayter, and Elvin Wyly (New York: Routledge, Taylor Francis Group, 2010), 531.

will be passed with the grass root participation from the indigenous residents and community organizers.

The second component of the urban governing regime element is the role of the business elite side of the urban governing regime. The real estate and banking concerns are often viewed as placing 'profit above people.' This notion makes the role of the urban governing regime critically important, as the business elite must abide by local housing and zoning ordinances. Local ordinances that require a percentage of new housing be dedicated for moderate income citizens would not diminish the profitability of land developers or lending institutions. The same logic applies to federal legislation that would require affordable home loans and fair lending practices for local bank branches in pre-gentrified as well as gentrified communities. These efforts are not anti-business nor would they discourage urban investment and redevelopment, since they are essential to creating livable cities that are affordable for all citizens not just the upper-middle class who are tired of suburban commutes and crave trendy in town residences.

The event of displacement may not always be the result of an influx of new residents who increase the cost of housing and the completion for homes. Sometimes displacement is a planned outcome to "sanitize" inner-city communities for the desired higher income new arrivals. Local governing regimes may actually restrict services to certain communities with the intent of hastening the departure of the indigenous residents to make way for the gentrifiers. The research describes these efforts:

Sometimes the disinvestment is a result of inadequate local political power to compel the city to serve the area properly, at other times it may represent a city's conscious policy of 'planned shrinkage' or 'triage' to induce people to move as a way of preparing the area the area for some form of redevelopment without the necessity of eminent domain and formal relocation services. As with the

revitalization phenomenon, owners as well as renters may be forced out although the latter predominate. The concept of a 'forced move' means not just the legally enforceable decision by someone who owns and controls the property to evict those living there as tenants; it also involves a decision by an occupant to sell or depart because external forces have made continued residence undesirable or impossible.<sup>14</sup>

Public housing residents find themselves in a predicament in which they are displaced quickly to make way for the master-planned 'mixed income' community. The presence of the indigenous residents in this instance is actually the only impediment to the demolition of the public housing community and the new mixed income solidly 'middle-class' communities that will replace it. The term 'rapid gentrification' has been applied to this particular type of gentrification where an entire community is displaced almost instantaneously and the traditional stage model theory of gentrification is not applicable. In the event of rapid gentrification, the local housing authority is responsible for relocating public housing tenants under the guidelines of the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Act of 1970. The tenants must be relocated to suitable replacement housing and cannot be evicted and left to their own devices.

Private property renters may share some of the rights and protections as federally subsidized housing residents. City zoning and ordinances may pass restrictions on landlords that require "property owners who displace occupants are required in some areas to provide home-finding assistance and monetary compensation to those they move out."<sup>15</sup> Although the displacement of public housing residents is detrimental to an entire community, the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Act of

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14. Hartman, "The Right to Stay Put," 532.

15. Ibid., 534.



1970 has the intent of providing renters with some resources and rights when faced with dislocation.

The rights of renters has often come in conflict with the rights of landlords to use their property as they see fit, as long as it does not become a public nuisance or violate local zoning ordinances. The use of “just-cause” evictions can provide renters with some rights when facing displacement. Hartman states the following:

So-called ‘just-cause’ or ‘good-cause’ eviction statutes may represent a fundamental change in the one-sided landlord-tenant relationship. Such statutes now apply to most federally assisted housing, to every tenant in the state of New Jersey and the District of Columbia, and to certain segments of the renter population in many other states and cities. Residents of mobile homes—usually owners of their home but renters of the lot on which the home stands, and therefore particularly vulnerable to eviction threats—are protected by ‘just-cause’ eviction statutes in Florida, and to some extent in California. Similar protection is offered as part of rent control laws—to prevent circumvention by means of eviction.<sup>16</sup>

“Just-cause” evictions become critical to the right of renters and to the efforts to mitigate displacement due to gentrification because indigenous residents cannot be evicted on a whim.

In theory, ‘just-cause’ eviction statutes reverse the tenant-landlord relationship; instead of a landlord having the right to kick a tenant out for virtually any or no stated reason, a set of allowable reasons for evictions is stipulated in the law. Only these reasons may be the basis for a court-ordered eviction. A tenant has a secure right of tenure so long as one or more of these conditions is not violated. If the tenant challenges the eviction notice, the burden of proof falls on the landlord to demonstrate that the cause for eviction is one permitted by the statute.<sup>17</sup>

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16. Ibid., 537.

17. Ibid.

The analysis of “just-cause” evictions makes the use of rent-control ordinances a logical progression in protecting the housing rights of tenants and the indigenous residents. Hence, a well-designed rent-control ordinance must:

- Keep rent increases to a level that reflects only real and unavoidable cost increases to the landlord.
- Forbid landlords from escaping controls by converting housing to uncontrolled uses (condominiums, commercial activities, new construction).
- Cover as much of the rental-housing stock as possible.
- Regulate rent for the unit regardless of continuity of a specific tenancy.
- Have more adequate enforcement mechanisms.
- No rent-control ordinance currently in force in the U.S. adequately meets all of these criteria.<sup>18</sup>

The plight of the indigenous residents becomes a right to decent housing in the face of gentrification. The view that displacement is an eventuality of gentrification should be resisted and can be decreased substantially if there is cooperation between urban governing regimes and organized community residents. The right to stay put and rent-control policies reflect the ideals of “people over profit” and “people are more important than things” and may be a useful theme that decreases the view that gentrification will eventually displace all of the indigenous residents.

There is the realization that families and individuals will opt to move from changing communities as home owners take advantage to increased demand for their homes. However, those indigenous residents who wish to remain and have provided a

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18. Ibid., 538.

sense of stability in the face of redlining and disinvestment may feel they have earned a right to remain in their homes.

Although the surrounding communities of the AUC have been able to resist displacement due to gentrification the residents of the public housing communities have not fared as well. One of the main differences between the stage model theory and rapid gentrification theory is the rate of time that occurs during the displacement of the indigenous residents. Another factor of rapid gentrification is the difficulty of organizing public housing residents. Once the Atlanta Housing Authority's strategic plan was published the rush to seek replacement housing was a predominant goal of the public housing residents. The understanding of the fact that the federal government had adopted the goal of selling the community to private developers, contributed the resignation that resistance was futile and displacement was an inevitability.

The act of resisting displacement due gentrification is an act of defiance of capitalism and the notion of class inequality expressed in a spatial form. The portrayal of the indigenous residents as being solely responsible for the destruction of the inner-city is essential to the revanchist themed strategy that enables the reclaiming of the inner-city by the middle class. This portrayal of the indigenous residents as savages in need of removal for the sake of the city's existence is a device of real estate developers who profit from the constant redevelopment of the urban landscape. The stage model of gentrification theory and the theory of rapid gentrification both end in the displacement of the indigenous residents to make way for the investment capital that accompanies the arrival of the middle and upper-middle class.

Rapid gentrification differs from the traditional stage model theory of gentrification because the indigenous residents have no means to resist displacement. The impending demolition of the entire public housing community makes any attempt to remain impossible. There is also the rush to find suitable privately owned section 8 housing that may not be readily available. Displacement under the stage model theory and the rapid gentrification theory can be equally traumatic and have varied stresses and results, but both must be described as threats to the basic human right to housing that is safe, affordable, and available to all that seek and need it.



## APPENDIX A

Photographs of the Former Site of John Hope Homes (Now The Villages of Castleberry Hill)





## APPENDIX B

### Photographs of Former Site of University Holmes





## APPENDIX C

Photographs of the Former Site of Harris Homes (Now Ashley College Town)





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